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The ANTIOCH REVIEW

Volume Seven · · · Winter 1947-48 · · · Number Four

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—Michael O'Hearn

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—Stanley Edgar Hyman

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The ANTIOCH REVIEW

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The ANTIOCH REVIEW

"Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world?"

—Abraham Lincoln

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The ANTIOCH REVIEW

Volume Seven ·.· Winter 1947-48 ·.· Number 4

EDITORIAL

IN A RECENT (and typical) editorial, *Life* magazine took the occasion of the death of Sidney Webb to beat English socialism about the ears. "The Webbs, though dead, are triumphant," said this think-piece; "while England, though not dying, is in worse economic straits than at any time since the Webbs were born. Any connection here? Any moral for the rest of the world?"

To anyone who does not have 100 shares of American Carbonated in his safety box, the ensuing argument was unconvincing. The moral, one might conclude, was that people in the *Life* office should stop confusing capitalist causes with socialist results. Yet this conclusion is negative and altogether too simple. A few moments of reflection suggest another, larger moral.

The editorial remarked that "to join the Fabian Society all you have to favor is equal opportunity for everybody through the 'collective ownership and democratic control' of economic resources." It then proceeded to spin out the evils symbolized by the part of the sentence in single quotes and to ignore the phrase "equal opportunity." The emphasis, we suggest, should be quite the reverse. To emphasize equal opportunity, of course, would be to advance the particular at the expense of the theoretical.

It is true that the world, and particularly we in America, need today a better understanding of the theories of capitalism, socialism, and communism. But it is equally true that recent events have conspired to prevent such understanding. We are in no mood to understand. For the initiative in this condition we can blame Russia, whose frantic charges of "capitalistic warmongering" are only the climax in a long series and whose words, if taken at face value, could lead in the end only to suppression of discussion as well as of co-operation. But we can blame ourselves too, for we have reacted badly, being reduced of late on the domestic front to witch

hunting and to a pitiful chasing of bad thoughts. What kind of business is this for a nation which professes to believe in freedom?

The world, as Dorothy Thompson has noted, is overcome with the spirit of nihilism. Any positive, liberty-inspiring suggestion or program seems doomed to drown in a sea of name-calling, hate, and obscurantism. Consider the fate of two such suggestions—the American proposal for control of atomic energy (world socialism at the source) and the Marshall Plan. The first has been locked up for months in the United Nations. And the second, which no amount of propaganda can make destructive, is endangered from several quarters but most seriously by a strange, miscellaneous collection of American nay-sayers.

It would be far better if the ideologies were allowed to cool for a bit and if the upper levels of discussion were taken over by the problem of freedom of opportunity—from which, more than we fully realize, other freedoms grow. Freedom of opportunity is something we ought to know about, for we have had more of it than any other people in history. And if it is now in danger or if changed institutions are required to maintain and improve it, then it is time we moved it to the top of the agenda.

Freedom of opportunity is a positive thing. Discussion of it would allow us to distract attention from too great a fear of Russia and from nostalgia for a day gone by. It might even allow us to pull into the discussion some of those people who, already tired of the ideologies, have gone off in pursuit of Toynbee, existentialism, or pie in the sky.

With freedom of opportunity as our measure, we should see more clearly what the Marshall Plan should mean to Europe—and eventually to America. We should understand Jennie Lee when she points with pride to Britain's new "privileged class"—her children. We should know, too, with greater certainty that Russia has found a short-cut to modern mass production and toward civilization but that she will never reach her destination until the Kremlin has thrown away its nightstick.

Recognizing the first importance of freedom of opportunity would rescue us from the new degradation of the political cliché—a degradation by which noncommunist liberals have automatically become "Trotskyites"; by which everyone outside the Communist Party and the PCA is "fascist," "warmonger," or "reactionary"; and by which everyone left of center is "communist." It would take us into new territory and give us new perspectives.

Recently, for example, Robert J. Alexander (*The Modern Review,* October) has examined the "Peronismo" governments in Argentina, Brazil, and Bolivia—all of which have been dismissed as reflective of Italian or Spanish fascism or of German Nazism. That these governments are by nature totalitarian is true enough. But according to Alexander, they take their point of departure from a part of the labor movement, a new part recently arrived in industrial centers and without benefit of ideology. In Europe fascism arose in desperation out of the lower middle class. In South America, Perón, the latter-day Vargas, and Villarroel took or retained power on the hopes of an expanding workers movement. Alexander sums up the differences this way: European fascism grew out of desperation, appealed to jingoism, had its primary source in the middle class, was clothed in the "leadership principle"; Peronismo, on the other hand, was founded on hope, has a social appeal similar to that of the Marxist parties, takes its popular base primarily in the working classes, and has no overbearing theory of the elite. If this analysis is correct, the possibility of peaceful change in these countries is still great. We cannot overlook their current totalitarian tendencies, yet we should not dismiss them too easily as without flexibility or the makings of democracy. The meaning for our foreign policy should be plain.

But it is in the domestic policy of the United States that we are primarily interested. Out of Alexander's analysis, the key factor appears to be hope. And if hope may be a partial criterion for our foreign policy, how much more important should it be on the domestic scene? Hope is traditionally American. It has shaped the prevailing temper of our economics and our politics. It is inseparable from American energy and American youth. How long could it live, however, were it not repeatedly watered and refreshed by freedom of opportunity?

In suggesting that freedom of opportunity be given top priority, we are not forgetting that discussion can blow itself out in windy speeches, academic editorials, "freedom days" observed in the schools, and advertisements by monopoly corporations. We already have too much loose talk about freedom. "Free enterprise" is not even as well understood as "communism." Even a phrase like "expanding economy," to which some shreds of sobriety still cling, might under rhetorical pressure become simply another phrase for bigger and better gadgets.

We don't need more phrases or pep talks. We need an investigation (but not by Congress). We need $10,000,000 to employ historians, sociologists, economists, psychologists, and statisticians to look into the matter. Let them try to spot freedom not only on the street corner but in the home and especially on the job. Let them ask questions. How many young Americans fail to get the education their innate ability is worthy of? How many sons are succeeding to father's business; are their attitudes different from Dad's; and what results do they show in the way the business is run? What becomes of the sons of industrial workers and of farmers? Do girls have greater opportunities than their mothers had? How can they have more? What's the attitude of workers toward their jobs? Why? Statistics would be one form of raw material, extended polling and interviewing another, but a larger part of the job would be planning the inquiry and organizing the results. We should know beforehand that the conclusions would not be wholly determinate but they would focus attention on the successes, the failures, and the trouble spots.

It will be argued, of course, that we already have much of the necessary factual material, and that we have failed to act upon it. But at best what we have is scattered and largely unorganized; some of it is suspect as special pleading, and none of it speaks with sufficient authority. What we have in mind is something like the investigation by the Commission on Freedom of the Press but on a necessarily much larger scale. If Henry Luce could be persuaded to give the CFP the money to do its job without attaching strings to it, surely some equally public-spirited citizen or group of citizens could be persuaded to finance the bigger investigation with a similar attitude toward freedom.

When the job was done, of course, the ideologies would still be with us. But they might then be employed with somewhat greater relevance to facts. P. B.

"CRISIS" AT LAKE SUCCESS

By MICHAEL O'HEARN

For Americans the young and unhappy life of the United Nations has been recorded with gusto and flourish in the pages of the daily press. If 30 per cent of the American people do not know what the UN is, as suggested recently by a top UN official, it is not because they find nothing about it in their newspapers. If, on the other hand, 30—or 40 or 80—per cent of Americans are confused about what is happening in, and to, the UN the explanation may be that they read what the newspapers are printing. Few proceedings outside the deliberations of Congress and the daily traffic at the White House receive the persistent attention and allotments of news space paid to the United Nations by this country's press.

Fifty to sixty journalists regularly report the debates and decisions of the United Nations. Each day thousands of words are carried by telephone, teletype, and telegraph from the reconverted war plant at Lake Success and the old World's Fair mausoleum at Flushing Meadow. The flow reaches to every newsroom and editor's desk in the nation. When the General Assembly convenes the flow of verbiage doubles or triples, depending upon the pungency and freshness of accusation being hurled at the moment.

On these latter occasions the permanent American correspondents' corps is supplemented by fifty to a hundred others, including most of the big by-lines of diplomatic reporting. In addition there are the newspapermen of other countries. But foreign journalistic custom and practice differ so greatly from the high-powered and comparatively hyperthyroid characteristics of American newspapering that mention of the foreign press is not relevant to a consideration of relations between the American newspaper reader and the United Nations.

From the beginning of the Dumbarton Oaks conference in 1945 the assignment of the UN reporter has been the same: to collect, evaluate, and sift the debates and decisions of UN organizations and to tailor them each day into a coherent report of progress or defeat on the international

road to peace and security. Since early in the San Francisco charter conference the collecting, evaluating and sifting have inevitably produced the same conclusion: peace and security will be measured for some time to come, probably for years, in terms of the tough diplomatic battle between Russia and the Western powers and the impact of that battle on the growth and effectiveness of the UN and its several parts.

If it had not become apparent sooner, it became plain one uneasy afternoon in March, 1946, that the battle would be waged with little regard for the damage it might inflict on the UN or what mockery it might make of the hopeful—and carefully ambiguous—words of the UN Charter. On that afternoon Andrei Gromyko of Russia strode granite-faced out of the Security Council chamber and the monkey wrench of reality clattered into the machinery of the new world organization. The Soviet walkout, one of the most dramatic and most profusely reported strolls in history, was not so much a turning point as it was a striking symbol of what was to endanger the UN and to make the stuff of UN news stories for months to come.

It was to be an all-out fight with neither side giving much quarter to the UN. The pattern set in the Iranian case has been retraced many times, not always in such sensational fashion and rarely to the accompaniment of such detailed news coverage. Examples include the failure in Indonesia engineered by the United States and the colonial powers; the obstructive Soviet vetoes in the Security Council, as distinguished from those which might be considered legitimate; the spurning of the UN by the Truman Doctrine and its successor, the Marshall plan; the deliberate provocation of more Soviet vetoes by the Western countries.

Cases like these have been marks on the yardstick for the UN and for the men and women who collect and write its news dispatches. Most correspondents are confined by conditions of space, selectivity and, most of all, "newsworthiness," to the major developments—the things which illustrate or are thought to illustrate most strikingly the trend of the big power battle and its effect on the UN. This is particularly true of correspondents for the Associated Press, the United Press, and the International News Service which jointly provide more than 90 per cent of the country's dailies with all the UN news they print. Rare is the newspaper outside New York and a few other large cities which will print more than one UN dispatch a day. Therefore the AP, UP, or INS cor-

respondent must select the most striking of several UN developments for his story, or compress half a dozen widely different developments into one dispatch. The limitations are less binding on such space-wealthy journals as the *New York Times* and *New York Herald Tribune*. The requirements are more flexible for the handful of newspapers outside New York which consider the UN important enough to merit the attention of one of their own full-time correspondents. These include only the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *Boston Globe* (semi-permanent), the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Chicago Daily News*, the *Newark Evening News*, and the *Washington Post* (semi-permanent).

It is important that of the 1,763 daily newspapers in the United States (1946 count) only 10 consider the UN worthy of the assignment of a full-time correspondent or one devoting an appreciable part of his time to its coverage. The three biggest New York afternoon dailies, the *World-Telegram*, the *Sun*, and the *Journal-American*, have no reporters assigned to cover one of the most active news stories in their own frontyard! The *New York Mirror*, with the second largest morning circulation in New York, also shuns Lake Success except for occasional stretches of the annual Assembly meeting. All rely on wire service coverage. The three major newspaper chains—Scripps-Howard, Hearst, and Gannett—do not bother to staff the UN. The rest of the nation's newspapers either rely completely on wire service coverage or dispatch a trained seal to Lake Success or Flushing for stories on particular developments.

The stream of words sent out each day by the press corps flows into the desks of editors for checking, cutting and changing (sometimes for political reasons, usually for structural reasons) and then is topped with a headline conceived for the purpose of catching the reader's eye and making it easy for him to decide whether the story is worth reading. (Some experts have estimated plaintively that the headline is too easy, that some 60 per cent of the persons who read copy like that from Lake Success never get any farther.) The finished product goes into the newspaper, on the front page if the day's story is striking enough, and inside if it is not. It is ready for the reader, who probably confines his acquaintance with the UN to the dispatches he reads in his daily newspaper. The UN is rarely mentioned in the weekly news magazines except in sneering or jocular fashion; it has been the subject of few magazine articles.

It is not straining truth to say that the product of this daily process has been as strange and confusing a hodge-podge of "crisis," "showdown," "Red veto," "ominous split," "growing rift," "dying United Nations" as any group of men of moderate intelligence and varied ideological and sociological beliefs have ever served up to the American reader.

Rarely if ever has there been such crazy-quilt treatment in the newspages of deliberations which, no matter how unproductive they may seem at any given moment, still are considered crucial to nations and the people who inhabit them. Important matters like the great power veto, atomic energy control, armaments reduction have been handled regularly in such superficial fashion that the very terms have become hollow catchwords which, at best, mean nothing to the reader and more often serve only to drive deeper his misconceptions or confusions.

Through most of the 1946 session of the General Assembly in New York, for example, the UN press corps blithely accepted at face value the debate of world-wide armaments reduction and for days carried to the rest of the country the impression that arms-scrapping was possible in the immediate future and that the world's diplomats were in fact seriously contemplating steps which would lead to that happy objective. If attempts were made—and there were a few—to break through the daily stream of diplomatic rhetoric to say that talk of disarmament was utterly inane in the face of world circumstances, the attempts were buried in the latest bulletin dispatch recording Vyacheslav M. Molotov's call for a withdrawal of all foreign troops from foreign territories, or Senator Tom Connally's return bleat that disarmament could begin just as soon as the Soviet Union told the size of its army and the height of its weapons stockpile.

A few correspondents tried to show up the debate for what it was—a propaganda duel which was started by Russia and was joined in eagerly and with equal insincerity by the United States and Great Britain. Their dispatches were drab and unexciting, however, when compared to the fare being dished up by their colleagues. For nearly a month, from the typewriter of virtually every correspondent at UN flowed a river of news stories taking seriously and reporting "objectively" the utterances of Molotov or Connally or Britain's Sir Hartley Shawcross—utterances which neither they nor correspondents pushing them into print really believed.

There have been similar situations at many stages of the complex and important negotiations in the UN Atomic Energy Commission, where

the story has not by any means been purely one of American generosity and Soviet obstructionism. Another case is the Military Staff Committee, the Big Five combined-chiefs-of-staff, which has sought for nearly two years with typical military secrecy and pettifogging to reach agreement on the essentials of a UN world security force. Here, as in many other avenues of the UN, the "news" stories have been the recriminations, the charges of obstructionism, the counter-charges of imperialistic plottings —day-to-day reports of the troubles and arguments of "procedure" in UN council chambers and committee rooms. It may be argued that such recriminations and allegations truly reflect the big power struggle swirling in and around the United Nations. And the argument holds true to a limited extent. The bitter and sensational statements heard almost every day at the UN do mirror to a certain extent the situation which the UN correspondent is striving to report. This is so, however, only when those statements and charges are assessed for their truth, their sincerity, their relevance, their percentage of propaganda content. It is so only when the reporter's assessment is put on paper, woven into the report he is preparing so that the reader may determine in some degree how much is pertinent and how much is dangerous rubbish.

Negotiations for atomic energy control offer an excellent illustration. The news story in atomic negotiations should be, of course, (1) the distance the United States and Russia have travelled, or the factors which have kept them from travelling toward a meeting of minds on atomic control machinery; (2) the connection between the progress or delay in atomic negotiations and the over-all world situation; and (3) the suspicions, difficulties, and occasional hopeful spots which have been encountered in the unprecedented attempt to join the Communist and the capitalist world in potentially the world's biggest business partnership— the development and use of atomic power. For a short time it was possible to tell the story simply on the basis of what Gromyko called Bernard M. Baruch or what Baruch snapped back at Gromyko. The statements of rival delegates and their supporters in stages of atomic negotiations delineated adequately the atomic issues themselves and the relationship of these issues to the over-all power struggle. For months those same statements and contentions have been repeated time and again in UN council chambers, and taken by the press, have been attired in new dress and reported as "new" developments in the atomic duel. Fundamental differ-

ences between Russia and the West on principles involved in atomic control have been skimmed off the top of every atomic commission meeting by the press; and, at the expense of other more interesting and more revealing aspects of the meeting, they have been palmed off as the latest twist in atomic affairs simply because those differences and the symbols used to describe them have proved popular with editors.

Actually in atomic negotiations there are developing signs which may help to answer the question whether communism and capitalism can find an economic middle ground. In discussing world-wide mining quotas for uranium, a system for doling out to each nation its fair share of nuclear reactors or atomic finishing plants, and a score of other searching matters now confronting atomic negotiators, the UN has provided precious insight into the possibility of the two big world powers finding a way to live together in relative harmony.

Like everything else in the United Nations, atomic negotiations now are dominated by the Russo-American power duel, and no correspondent can adequately perform his duties by trying to minimize it or by failing to illustrate it in all of its strength. The conflict is there every day, in the speeches of an American or a Russian, the parliamentary maneuvering of a Briton, the tremulous compromise suggestion of a Pole. The point is, however, that the recriminations and countercharges come in many brands and colors; some are genuine; some are masquerade or maneuver; others are outright untruths or clever distortions. All must be reported, of course, for the reporter's duty is to report what is seen and heard. But what is important is the way in which he reports. By picking a speech, a rumor, a maneuver and dignifying it with the white of news stock and the black of printer's ink the reporter assumes some obligation for orienting the subject of his news story to the past, present, and future of the phenomenon with which it is connected. To select at random an item for its shock value or because it happens to be the only thing lying around at edition time would be indicted by any respectable newspaperman as an infringement of the journalist's code of conduct. Yet in an unconscious and certainly not ill-intentioned way, and to a limited degree, such acts have been and are being committed often at Lake Success.

It is a safe bet that nine of ten Americans, if asked today for their impression of the key issue of atomic energy negotiations now, would answer (outside of the generally rotten state of American-Russian rela-

tions) "the veto." Actually the veto, a pet of speakers on atomic affairs and correspondents who report them, has been deteriorating in importance since early in the UN atomic talks; and some day, as British, Canadian and other delegates have remarked several times, it may disappear altogether as an issue. This is attributable to the growing belief that once a big power gets to the stage where it decides to "veto" punishment of its own or its friend's illegal A-bomb making, you have a war on your hands, veto or no veto. To readers of some newspapers—the *New York Herald Tribune, St. Louis Post Dispatch,* and to a lesser degree the *New York Times* and *Christian Science Monitor*—many of the more instructive aspects of atomic negotiations have been reported fully and well. The same cannot be said for the rest of the press.

The record is similar with respect to other UN agencies. On July 29 in the Security Council the United States introduced a proposal for settling the long and bitter fight over turmoil in the Balkans. It would have required the Security Council to send an 11-nation commission to the Balkans to quell the trouble there, without placing blame on Greece or its three Communist-governed neighbors. Gromyko vetoed it. He contended the proposal violated the Charter and threatened to interfere with the sovereignty of the Balkan countries. Twenty-one days later the United States came back with a far stronger proposal which called for the same commission vetoed by Russia and directly charged Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia with aggression against Greece. Australia, whose support of Anglo-American policy has been as systematic as Poland's adherence to the Soviet line, chipped in with a new version of the milder proposal which had drawn Gromyko's lonely "no" vote. Gromyko vetoed both of these. There had been almost no doubt from the moment the second American proposal and the Australian resolution were tabled that Russia, which already had found it necessary to veto milder resolutions, would feel compelled to use the veto again. It was so obvious, in fact, that UN officials, reporters, and diplomats who would talk agreed that the United States had deliberately forced two additional Soviet vetoes as a propaganda shot-in-the-arm for the impending American effort to transfer the entire Balkans mess to the General Assembly. The Assembly was in the process of convening, in fact, and the two Soviet vetoes were an excellent booster.

But the news report for that day hardly conveyed the above analysis. It was a "fact" that Gromyko had used two vetoes; there they were, right

on the record, so it was a "fact" which made the lead on the day's story. It was not necessarily a "fact" that the United States provoked two vetoes. Who said so? (No one, for print.) Was it on the record? The correspondents knew it, but it was difficult or impossible to cut through the double thickness of American journalistic practice and complicated UN procedure to tell that story as it deserved to be told.

The illustration is not intended by any means to justify Russia's veto of the Balkans Commission or to question American motives. All of that is beside the point, which is that two more vetoes—big and important events in the life of the UN—were added to the list, and your newspaper failed to convey the true cause and effect.

II

The traditional practices of American journalism and the new and complex procedures of the UN have ganged up on the newspaper reader who wants to follow accurately what is happening to the organization he saw shaped so hopefully during the war.

First, what is the nature of the UN and how does it relate to the story in tomorrow's morning edition?

In every UN agency, from the big and vocal Assembly on down to the tiny subcommittee studying cocoa-leaf chewing in the Andes, the life force is the process of negotiation or diplomacy. While diplomacy is actually a means to an end—one of the ways to resolve conflict between nations—it also is in essence a form of conflict.

There are two kinds: diplomacy to work adjustments in relations between nations by peaceful means and for purely peaceful objectives; and diplomacy to gain advantage and/or time in preparation for aggressive or defensive military action. The United Nations is simply a mechanism for protecting the sovereignty of its nation members and for fostering and refining the first kind of diplomacy—peaceful—while eliminating the practice of and need for the second kind—diplomacy for war.

Even under far happier circumstances than today's the basic element of diplomacy, conflict, does not disappear simply because international relations are transferred from the relative anarchy of direct negotiation and nude power politics to a state of multilateral action guided and bounded by a general code of conduct. The code in this instance is the United Nations charter. On the contrary, the element of conflict is com-

pressed and heightened like gas pumped into a cylinder, by the confines of a Security Council or General Assembly and by the bright—as well as relatively new—glare of constant publicity. Even under the best of conditions, then, conflict will be both the product and the catalyst of any organization within which men strive to change and adjust the relationship of one nation or group of nations to another.

A machine like the UN, to prove its worth, must serve first to keep the conflict alive within the rules and bounds laid down in the charter. As long as this happens, the conflict is "contained," to use a word that has become popular in foreign policy circles, and the nonpeaceful forms of conflict are less likely to be called into use. But the UN must be more than a safety valve. It must after a reasonable time begin to channel this flow of conflict into a concrete result—a program for atomic control, a commission to scale down armaments, a body to adjust border trouble between Greece and its neighbors, a settlement to warfare in Java. The process goes on perpetually, providing inhabitants of the big UN press room with a primary ingredient of the headline-catching news story—conflict. The failure of the press room thus far has been a failure to root out and connect the procedural conflict, often hot and smoky, with the underlying basic conflict and a failure to carry this important connection through to the reader. The fight over how to vote on a given resolution or the debate of terms of reference for a new commission is allowed to distort or displace the important thing—the meaning of the resolution being voted on or the purpose of the commission.

The correspondent at UN is not left alone to chart a course through this jungle of procedure, propaganda, friction, and oratory. Few governments have forgotten the techniques of propaganda and public relations learned before and during the war. The big power delegations at UN have established full and efficient diplomatic relations with the press gallery. The United States delegation maintains three full-time press relations officers, two of them experienced newspapermen and one a veteran of government public relations. They attend all delegation meetings, keep aware of all developments dealing with American policy and make it their business to acquaint newspapermen with the American line of thought. Great Britain has provided a press relations official close enough to the workings of the Foreign Office to be able to indicate in advance the contents of expected new instructions from 10 Downing Street or to pro-

vide inquisitive reporters with a more complete report of the activities of other UN delegations than reporters can obtain from the delegates themselves. France, China, and several other countries playing leading roles in the UN have similarly recognized the necessity of keeping their position clear and their axes well honed in the press in this time and place of fishbowl diplomacy.

Of all the big countries only Russia, no slouch itself at detecting and capitalizing on a sharp propaganda angle when one comes along, held out for a while. But now, Russia has joined in. For months at Lake Success reporters found it necessary to rely on inscrutable shrugs from Gromyko or an aide or on flimsy hints from a Pole or Yugoslav to determine how Russia might vote on an issue or to obtain an explanation for an important Soviet move. This fostered inaccuracy and underscored an already disproportionate reliance by newsmen on sources in the American or British camps. As time and debates wore on, however, Gromyko expanded and warmed up. He began to stop for chats with correspondents, singly or in groups; occasionally granted individual correspondents a "background interview." Important Gromyko statements began to be translated into English, reproduced in quantity, and distributed in the press as Americans and others had been doing all along. Perhaps it was an outgrowth of the gradual thawing-out process that has been noticeable in Soviet Union delegates to the UN, or maybe it grew out of the Kremlin's analysis of the press clippings sent so assiduously from America to Moscow. At any rate, to cap an intriguing transition, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Y. Vyshinsky brought with him for the 1947 General Assembly the first effective, American-style press agent Russia ever had produced at an international gathering. Capitalizing on practices and opportunities which long had served other delegations well, the Russians discovered new vistas for testing and elaborating their program within the UN.

The UN itself maintains a $100,000-a-year press office which is one adjunct of a $3,000,000 Public Information Division made up also of departments for radio, films and other visual information media, public relations and overseas informational activities. It grinds out hundreds of press releases, statements, copies of speeches and summaries of meetings.

Doubtless the over-all impact of these delegation and UN press services is favorable. Many important UN developments would go unwatched were it not for them; many important facets of American or British or

Russian policy might go undetected or, at best, be inadequately communicated. The one defect, however, has been the erection of a fence between reporters and the real sources of UN news—Austin, Cadogan, Gromyko, Trygve Lie and other diplomats and international civil servants. Contact with them is reduced to occasional corridor conversations or hasty conferences in the crowded delegates' lounge. Gromyko's press interviews and periodic background talks with major American officials are exceptions, although in neither case are correspondents enabled to identify the source of stories they may write as a result of the talks. Most delegates make a practice of refusing to talk with or associate with journalists. Therefore, for information beyond what he collects each day by watching and listening to debates, the reporter relies largely on professional press relations experts whose statements and "guidance" make up a heavy percentage of the news he files for his wire service or newspaper. The "authoritative source" or "reliable informant" who originates so much news is normally a delegation or a UN press officer.

It is natural for the men who hand out information to peddle only that best calculated to further or justify the position of the delegation they represent. That is their job. This is not to imply that they deal in anything but fact; all are men whose integrity and reliability are beyond question.

Nevertheless, to take at face value the information disseminated by press relations officers, as correspondents frequently do, is to serve as an instrument for advancing a delegation's position in the public prints. Just as the publicizing of procedural squalls has displaced or obliterated the major storms in most copy from Lake Success, the acceptance of the publicly-stated positions of various delegations and propaganda speeches of diplomats at face value, without careful and perceptive examination, has contributed inaccuracy and confusion.

It is possible that the ideologies and the backgrounds of the UN correspondents themselves contribute also to the tenor of UN news, although the contribution is hard to discern if it exists. There are few journalists of genuinely broad experience and extensive knowledge now covering UN deliberations, although there are many competent and assiduous men who by no means take the UN lightly and whose desire to perform a good and effective job is very great. One point, perhaps, is important. All of the correspondents writing UN news for the American

press are Americans. They naturally write from an American viewpoint, with American idiom and American logic.

These Americans represent a wide range of political and sociological belief and are not by any means unanimous about the wisdom or validity of this or that aspect of their own country's policy. (A recent poll by *Newsweek* covering 45 UN correspondents showed that 62 per cent, or 28, believed American policy in the recent meeting of the General Assembly was not calculated to help UN. Eighteen correspondents, or 40 per cent, felt it was not even helpful to the United States. Thirty-six of the group were American correspondents. The poll was not completely indicative, for it was poorly conducted and badly timed. But it did indicate that inhabitants of the UN press room have some sharp impressions about American policy in UN—impressions presumably built on a dispassionate analysis of that policy—which have not been relayed to the public.)

While the American correspondents' corps is strictly American, just as the French is strictly French and the British strictly British, the United Nations is an international organization. The things that happen there are not all American; all proposals are not couched in the American idiom and all activities are not guided or settled by American logic. The internationality extends to the UN Secretariat of 2,800 persons. In working for the UN they retain their national citizenship, but that national identity is shelved during their tenure at UN by an oath of office which pledges them, as international civil servants, to loyalty to the United Nations. The implication which might be drawn from this is that through news of the United Nations we might be slightly better oriented or imbued in some way with an "internationalism" which tended to convey the UN viewpoint rather than the American.

III

Now having considered the nature of the United Nations and the conditions at the source of UN news, let us take up the nature of American journalism and its role in the character of UN coverage.

If all the barriers to improved United Nations reporting were removed at Lake Success, the dispatches would still be subject to the deep-rooted traditions and prejudices of American journalism and to the theory of the Fourth Estate that the news people want to read is the news which is punchiest, snappiest, most eye-catching, but not necessarily most sig-

nificant. With the development of modern communications has come the additional necessity of speed. Newspapers want important news before their competitors get it. For news-gathering agencies like the UP, AP and INS, it is a well understood maxim that the story which reaches the editor first is probably the one which will get printed. This leads, of course, to some peculiar and grotesque results.

To the news editor, the UN is just another story. He must keep abreast of every news development, from the mayor's conferences at City Hall to the bread riot in Milan or the coup d'etat in Bangkok. The same holds true for the telegraph editor, the man who plucks the makings of the day's front page from the torrent of pathos, crime, politics, death, and taxes which flows onto his desk. These men have, and have had for many unchanging years, their format for news. It must catch the eye; the "news" must be in the opening paragraph or lead, plain and simple enough so a headline can be pulled from it and pencilled at the top of the copy. If the lead does not contain a "headline" then, no matter how plain and simple, the story usually will be shoved aside to make room for the competitor's version. It must in addition be something that will excite or titillate or intrigue or shock the reader—something that will get him to buy the newspaper. This format is not, of course, that followed by every newspaper. The two large New York dailies (the *Times* and *Herald-Tribune*) are laudable exceptions and there are others. Nor is the format always conducive to distortion or inferiority. Many kinds of news can be conveyed adequately within the format, in spite of the high speed and heavy-impact writing style and the other characteristics that go with it. Crime and disaster news, human interest stories, and even some of the highly-complicated political and legislative news from Congress or state capitals can be handled in this way—so long as it deals with happenings and procedures with which the average reader is acquainted by habit, by experience, and by schooling. Background—that thread of yesterday's or last year's events so pertinent to the relating of today's occurrence—need not be written into stories of these types. If the background is needed the reader himself weaves it in from memory. His schoolbooks, his day-to-day observation, and his normal absorptive capacity have built up in him an understanding of the procedures followed and the symbols used.

Even in some UN stories the technique suffices. When, for instance, Vyshinsky calls Americans "warmongers" and lists a dozen prominent

citizens to illustrate his point, that is news which does not need background. In many important UN developments the technique does not stand up to the test. Frenzied speed and trite over-simplification (as distinct from essential simplification) are characteristics which appear to have become necessary to get a UN story into many newspapers. Their effect is to make intellectual mincemeat of events which merit instead careful, reflective writing whose purpose is not to beat a clock or bestir a bored telegraph editor, but to mirror in the light of past developments and policies the import of a given piece of diplomacy. Many of the requirements of modern journalism hinder or block the desired result. Speed is one, brevity another. Still another is the editor's insistence on sharp, pungent but at the same time, distorting or misleading words ("clashed" instead of "differed," "showdown" instead of "decision"). It is not considered good practice by many newspapers and wire agencies to begin a news story with a matter-of-fact statement. "The United States and Russia seem to be drifting further apart in the Security Council fight over the trouble in Northern Greece," if it is to get into the newspaper had better be changed to read: "The East-West rift widened today as the Security Council moved into a critical debate on the Greek question." This is not a startling example; the contrast is not great between the two versions. Yet it illustrates the tendency to expand and ultimately to distort a rivalry or a given moment of friction which, while it should be reported as a rivalry or given moment of friction, should be kept in context. Magnify examples like the preceding one a few times and the danger is more apparent.

It is not possible, of course, to ban that old journalistic reliable, the cliché. News stories must reach a wide audience. The more important a development, the wider the audience it should reach. Clichés, atrocious and trite as they may appear, are the newspaper's best link to a wide reader audience; without them, complex stories like those from the United Nations or Washington and from many other sources would go unread or uncomprehended by a large segment of readers. But if journalists allow clichés to run away with them, the results are far worse than those provoked by opaqueness. This has happened to a great extent at UN. Terms of combat, the language of the battlefield and invasion beach were carried over from the war to San Francisco and from that day on have been employed diligently to bring the UN down to common terms.

The most obscure procedural scrap merited words and phrases once reserved for matters like the sinking of the Titanic, the crash of the stock market, or the invasion of a continent. Crises became plentiful. It was not long before the UN correspondent found himself in the dilemma of Hollywood—completely devoid of words big enough to describe the really big thing when it comes along.

It would be naive to believe that there will be much change in the nature of American newspapering soon. Perhaps there never will be. The shortcomings are the by-product of a competitive and hard-headed type of journalism which has made American newspapers and news agencies the best and most effective in the world. Rivalry, speed, simplified style and language, together with crusading and civic-minded journalism have carried information, enlightenment and education that otherwise would never have been disseminated. That such a system should produce some sins is not unexpected. Even in the best of journalistic families the desire for a sharp headline may prevail over the need for careful rhetoric.

Newspapers will continue writing and printing news in the way they now write and print it as long as they sell newspapers. For it is selling newspapers and the advertising space which is in them that is the primary goal and interest of the average American publisher. The theory that a newspaper is first a business afforded the protection of the United States the circulation he already has. A drop in circulation hits with a dull thud in every corner of a newspaper plant. Publishers and the people who sell their newspapers for them admit they are sensitive to the likes and dislikes of their readers. A complaint from Irate Housewife or Disturbed Citizen, they say, draws more attention than an unidentified body in the police chief's automobile. The body will never be a subscriber, at least not any Constitution and then a public servant—a theory which is more popular with publishers than with other elements of the population—is indisputably one of the chief causes of the public's inability to read what it wants to read in its newspaper about the United Nations. Newspaper emphasis on business could prove a weapon in the hands of the reader if he and enough of his fellows choose to use it. Any newspaper publisher wants to sell more newspapers and, if that is impossible, to hold on to more.

If this is true the newspaper reader might be able to provoke a change in the way his newspaper and his news service treats UN news. Letters from readers, if there were enough of them, would produce some changes.

If the news format itself is not subject to change—and there are many genuine reasons why that is the case—the reader might find it in his power to induce his editor or publisher to analyze what he is getting each day from Lake Success with a view to improving and supplementing it. The simplest and most effective remedies—barring, of course, a revolution in journalism overnight—would be:

Assignment by more newspapers of their own correspondents to Lake Success. They should be ordered to collect and write interpretative news, color stories, and other off-the-track articles. Editors and editorial writers might be allowed occasional visits to the UN for a personal study of the organization and the men who run it.

A weekly UN column. The press in its devotion to columnists has reached from the weighty comment of Walter Lippman to the bosom-measuring of Earl Wilson, but has been amazingly scornful of the United Nations as the subject for an interesting and instructive column. A few newspapers could jointly and cheaply develop a high-level UN columnist.

Better headlines. The institution of the headline has corrupted more UN copy than most of the other defects joined together. Simple headlines shorn of sensationalism and centered on a truthful summary of the story's content might check public misunderstandings and misapprehensions.

Background information. Many UN developments are meaningless unless linked with previous happenings inside and outside the world organization. At both the newspaper office and Lake Success writers and editors should be urged to weave more background into spot news stories.

Many bigger and better reforms than these are needed to push United Nations news coverage nearer the ideal, but these seem for the most part unattainable without a revolution. It would be possible for the reading public to precipitate some of the changes. But it is unlikely that the reader can make many suggestions about what he wants to read if, through his newspaper, he has not gained any idea of what he is not getting.

That seems to leave the responsibility with the press itself. It is a major responsibility, for if nothing else has been proved at the United Nations in its brief existence, it has been shown that the UN charter and the machinery built upon it mean nothing to the diplomats who use them as long as they mean nothing to the people.

MORRIS RAPHAEL COHEN

By MILTON R. KONVITZ

SEVERAL DAYS after the death of Morris Raphael Cohen on January 28, 1947, *The New York Times* stated editorially that long before his death Professor Cohen had become "an almost legendary figure in American philosophy, education, and the liberal tradition." His wise and scholarly works, said the editor, were well known not only to professional philosophers but to lawyers and judges, including Justices Holmes, Brandeis, and Cardozo, who were his intimate friends. He had also an independent celebrity as a great teacher: "Several college generations of students at the College of the City of New York knew him as a contemporary Socrates who asked ruthlessly searching questions and persisted in questioning until he evoked such answers as the rational mind could assent to." But he was a gadfly not only to students: "He was one of the most celebrated conversationalists of intellectual circles in our time, at once ironical and genial. He was, through his students, many of them in positions of major importance in law, industry, education and government, a deep and wide influence on American life." The editor pointed to two special qualities by which one might measure the nature of Professor Cohen's philosophical temper and achievements; namely, "the wide human range of his learning and interests, and his concern for precision and intellectual vigor. . . . He insisted on the necessity and the possibility of a rational discovery of the principles implicit in human existence and experience. He was a liberal in his warm and wide sympathies and his awareness of human tragedy in our time, but he was never taken in by sentimental or fanatic clichés. He was as critical of the rigidities and the emotionalisms of the left as he was of the right." Philosophy was to Professor Cohen a way of life, a guard against prejudices, and "a consolation of steady insight and understanding in a world of the precarious and the disastrous."

II

Born in Minsk, Russia, on July 25, 1880, Cohen received the traditional education of an orthodox Jewish boy in East Europe. When he was

twelve his parents brought him to the United States. Eight years later he received his Sc. B. degree from the College of the City of New York—but only after he had worked in a poolroom and sold papers between the Bowery and Park Row—and six years later he was awarded the Ph. D. degree by Harvard, where he studied under William James and Josiah Royce. Shortly before and for several years after the turn of the century he taught at the Educational Alliance on New York's East Side, and at the Davidson Collegiate Institute, a school run by Rabbi David Davidson. In 1899 Cohen met Thomas Davidson, founder of the Fabian Society, the Fellowship of the New Life, and the Aristotelian Society, and later said that Davidson had greatly stimulated him intellectually and spiritually. Cohen taught for a year in the New York City public school system and in 1902 began to teach mathematics at City College, a subject which he continued to teach (except for two years of graduate work at Harvard) for ten years. He was not happy teaching mathematics, although his interest in the subject was very keen. It was a study of mathematical philosophy, especially Bertrand Russell's *Principles of Mathematics* (1903) which liberated him "from the feeling of helpless philosophic bewilderment" and enabled him "to undertake an independent journey."

Cohen's first love was philosophy. This love, he said, was awakened in him in his early years, before he came to the United States, by his grandfather, a poor tailor in the Russian town of Nesviesh. "Though he never learned to write and had only a moderate reading knowledge of Hebrew," the grandson wrote years later, "he had become the master of an extraordinary amount of knowledge and wisdom. Walks and talks with him first stimulated my imagination about the world at large and its history. From him, also, I acquired a certain ineradicable admiration for the ascetic virtues and a scorn for the life of wealth, ease, creature comforts, and all that goes under the old name of worldliness."

To philosophize seemed to him to be "as natural and desirable in itself as to sing, to dance, to paint, or mould, or to commune with those we love." The opportunity to teach his favorite subject came to him in 1912 when he was appointed assistant professor of philosophy at City College. This meant to him "the end of a long valley of humiliation. I had labored for six years with the Leah of mathematics yearning for the Rachel of philosophy."

For twenty-six years Cohen taught philosophy to thousands of students at City College. It was not until seven years before he retired from his position at City College that *Reason and Nature,* his major work, was published, yet for a quarter of a century his name was known throughout the breadth and length of the country wherever men were devoted to a pursuit of wisdom.

Cohen made no effort to acquire disciples; for he conceived it as his duty as a teacher to be the critic rather than the prophet or the system-builder. This position exposed him to the charge of being merely critical, negative, or destructive. "I have always been ready," he said, "to plead guilty to that charge." He considered it an important service "in the cause of liberal civilization to develop a spirit of genuine regard for the weight of evidence, to inculcate the habit of admitting ignorance when we do not know, and to nourish the critical spirit of inquiry which is inseparable from the love of truth that makes men free." He once said to a student who reproached him for his destructive criticism: "You have heard the story of how Hercules cleaned the Augean stables. He took all the dirt and manure out and left them clean. You ask me: 'What did he leave in their stead?' I answer 'Isn't it enough to have cleaned the stables?' " He challenged accepted dogmas, fashionable opinions, uncritical acceptance of beliefs and views, no matter by what authority supported. He compelled his students—future physicians, lawyers, teachers—to examine and think critically, deeply, the problems that they will need to face as specialists and as citizens. He wanted to make of his students responsible thinkers, not disciples. Some of his students became in their own right eminent philosophers: Professors Ernest Nagel and Herbert W. Schneider of Columbia, Professor Sidney Hook of New York University, and Professor Paul Weiss of Yale—to mention only several whose names come readily to mind.

When a boy, Cohen did not participate in boyish games: first he was occupied with a study of the Old Testament, the Talmud, and Yiddish books on Jewish history; then he was occupied with philosophical, mathematical, and scientific studies. His family life was rich in sentiment and love—Mary Ryshpan, whom he married in 1906, died after thirty-six years of married life. In his wife, two sons and a daughter Cohen found enough society for his needs; but in addition he enjoyed the close friendship of some old friends, among them Justices Holmes, Brandeis, Cardozo, and

Frankfurter; Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell. Despite his physical frailties, he pushed himself hard, worked constantly on his teaching lectures, articles, and books. In 1923 he edited a collection of Charles S. Peirce's philosophical essays under the title *Chance, Love, and Logic*. In 1929 he was president of the American Philosophical Association. By 1938 he had published *Reason and Nature* (1931), *Law and the Social Order* (1933), and (with Ernest Nagel) *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method* (1934). He had plans for ten other books—a volume on metaphysics, a treatise on law, a book on logic, a statement of his philosophy of liberalism, a volume on the will to illusion, an introduction to philosophy, a volume on Jewish problems, a philosophy of history, a history of science, and a study of the development of American thought. He felt that he would not be strong enough to accomplish this program if he continued to teach, so in January, 1938 he retired from active teaching at City College—the institution with which he had been intimately associated from the year 1895 when he entered as a freshman. By the time of his death nine years later, at the age of sixty-six, he saw two more of his books in print: *A Preface to Logic* (1944) and *The Faith of a Liberal* (1946). The former of these books is dedicated to City College and its students "who gave zest to my life." He wrote six other books that were on his program and they will be published posthumously: *The Meaning of History* (his Carus lectures); *Reflections of a Wandering Jew; A Dreamer's Journey: an Autobiography; Studies in Philosophy and Science; Studies in Juristic Philosophy;* and *Currents of American Thought.* In addition there will be published *Source Book in Greek Science* (which he prepared with the collaboration of I. E. Drabkin).

His retirement from teaching at City College left Cohen with more time to devote to his studies and writing; but he did not give up teaching entirely: he accepted a professorship at the University of Chicago; in 1941 he began the preparation of the Carus lectures, delivered in 1945, and he was a visiting professor at Harvard 1938-1939, and at Yale the following year.

III

Cohen considered himself philosophically "a stray dog unchained to any metaphysical kennel." It seemed to him "better to brave the muddy realities of the unprotected out-of-doors, the uncertain food, the attacks from the watchdogs of comfortable homes, and above all the chilling rains

and winds of factual experience. . . . I have never become completely at home in even the greatest of academic philosophies." Bertrand Russell came closer to being his philosophical god than any other thinker. He said that he was faithful to Russell's fundamental teaching even when Russell strayed from the way. He liked to think of himself as a logician —he called his intellectual autobiography in *Contemporary American Philosophy* (1930) "The Faith of a Logician." His emphasis on criticism, skepticism and logical analysis led many persons to view Cohen as a philosophical nihilist, a great nay-sayer, an iconoclast, a destroyer of other men's faiths and philosophies, as one who could effectively wreck but not build. This view of Cohen is, however, only partially true. Cohen had the capacity to build, and this capacity he manifested in his more substantial productions; namely, in *Reason and Nature,* in *Law and the Social Order,* and in *The Faith of a Liberal.* Let us first examine *Reason and Nature: an Essay on the Meaning of Scientific Method.*

The book covers a wide range of subjects, disclosing the catholicity and erudition of the author: mathematics, biology, jurisprudence, ethics, the social and physical sciences. From the first page to the last Cohen demonstrates his unqualified devotion to impartial reason: "Our reason may be a pitiful candlelight in the dark and boundless seas of being," he says, "but we have nothing better, and woe to those who wilfully try to put it out."

Cohen's search for fundamental principles of thought and categories of reality led him to attack empiricism or nominalism of the type which admits the existence of only particulars. Logical or mathematical relations are real; their reality justifies the hypothetical and deductive procedures of science. Scientific inquiry discovers abstract relations which characterize the world of phenomena. The reality of mathematical relations make possible a "biting into the world." Relativism, nihilism, or skepticism fails to disclose the nature of mind or reality. It does not follow from this, however, that a priori rationalism must, therefore, be accepted. An understanding of the logical and hypothetical character of mathematics destroys the ground of any assertion that space must be Euclidean. On the one hand one sees, said Cohen, that the laws or postulates of mathematics or logic are the invariant forms or relations of all possible objects; they are the laws of all possible being but are themselves neither physical nor mental. On the other hand, one sees that from purely formal considera-

tions no material facts are deducible. Science involves logic; on the one hand we see that it is rational, that phenomena conform to laws of logic; on the other hand we see that phenomena involve an element of contingency.

The discussion thus far of the laws of logic and the nature of science shows Cohen's adherence to what he called the principle of polarity, which occupied a central place in his thought. There is a polarity of terms and relations; neither is reducible to the other; terms and relations involve one another. Opposites "such as immediacy and mediation, unity and plurality, the fixed and the flux, substance and function, ideal and real, actual and possible," all involve each other when applied to any significant entity. This principle of polarity seems to be the central fact of Cohen's metaphysics of science. Polarity is a supplement to the principle of causality; for a natural event must have a cause, but the cause is opposed by some factor which prevents it from producing a greater effect than it actually does; thus protoplasm lives by continually dying. The principle of polarity applies to social as well as to physical and biological events. In all determination there are opposing categories: unity and plurality, identity and difference, activity and passivity.

Thus Cohen's denial of both empiricism and absolutism may be viewed as an instance of the effectiveness of the principle of polarity. He believed that rational structure is a fundamental phase of the world; but he also believed that there is an element of contingency. There is both intelligibility and contingency in the world.

Cohen did not always, in the presentation of his argument, keep himself scrupulously neutral between two poles, between the fixed elements in reality and the flux, between the variant and the invariant characters of the world, between unity and plurality, between the ideal and the real, or between idealism and naturalism, between reason and nature. His sharpest barbs were directed at those who are romantically attached to immediacy rather than mediation, who are attached to "life" or "experience." There is no intelligible life without the polestar of invariance or identity; the weight and emphasis of his argument seemed to be on the side of intelligibility as opposed to contingency, on the side of idealism as opposed to naturalism, on the side of reason as opposed to nature; status or fixity as opposed to change. It is to be doubted, however, if this disparity in the weights of opposite sides of the scale was more than polemical.

When Cohen framed his arguments, empiricism was in the ascendant and idealism was on the defensive. Cohen always distrusted ideas that were fashionable, for they threatened to become the new dogmas, displacing the old. There was a greater danger that men would adopt the new philosophies as absolutes than that they would go back to the discredited faiths. It was, therefore, necessary to fight harder against the new gods, still young and fresh, than against the gods already in the twilight.

IV

Cohen's influence on judges and teachers of law can hardly be exaggerated. The weight of his legal philosophy was felt in high courts, including the United States Supreme Court.

As a young boy Cohen discovered that the law is chiefly a pattern of life, rather than a set of rules to be memorized and obeyed. The God of the Jews was primarily a lawgiver, and Moses was a law teacher. Cohen was exposed to legal studies as soon as he began to study the Old Testament and the Talmud. The law became and remained for him a lifelong interest.

Law and the Social Order: Essays in Legal Philosophy consists of twenty-five essays published in the twenty years preceding 1933. The book discloses such an extensive and penetrating knowledge of legal philosophy as was equalled in the United States only by Dean Roscoe Pound, and probably not equalled by any British or continental thinker. The book treats of the legal philosophies of de Tourtoulon, Geny, Duguit, Charmont, Demogue, Ihering, Stammler, Kohler, del Vecchio, Pound, Laski, Gray, Jerome Frank, Holmes, Krabbe, and others. The book has notable discussions of property and contract; an attack on what he called the "phonograph theory of the judicial function." Before Franklin D. Roosevelt attempted to reorganize the Supreme Court, Cohen had pointed out that the judges of our higher courts are generally elderly gentlemen who in their younger days had been successful representatives of the interests of bankers, manufacturers, and merchants.

But his sharp criticism of the jurisprudence of concepts did not mean that he joined the camp of the legal realists. Here, too, the principle of polarity came into play: one must give weight to the abstract legal principle and to the concrete case. Cohen was as opposed to legal anarchy or naked "experience" in legal phenomena as he was to the legal philosophy

that saw only the empty abstract rule or doctrine. There must be both discretion and rule; there is a need for both realism and idealism.

In this instance, too, his argument in later years seemed to favor order and reason, rationalism, the unchanging, as against the contingent and the changing. But this emphasis was only polemical; for in legal philosophy, too, nominalism of a radical nature appeared to be in fashion, and the old conceptualism was losing its nerve. He distrusted the new movement; he wanted to expose its more extreme manifestations as shallow fads. In truth, in his legal philosophy, as in his philosophy of nature, Cohen was no champion of causes, no partisan advocate. He attacked all false prophets, but especially those who made the most noise in his day or appeared to attract more devotees than did competing prophets.

Cohen attacked those who, like Professor Beard, distrusted the Supreme Court less than Congress. When one considers, he said, the long roll of judicial decisions "such as the Dred Scott Case, the Lochner Case, the Adair Case, the child labor cases, the Coppage case, the minimum wage cases up to 1937, the voiding of Congressional legislation to protect the Negroes against lynching and the deprivation of civil rights, or the public against being gouged by ticket scalpers, fraudulent bakers, and conscienceless employment agencies, the sadism of the courts will far outweigh that of Congress even though aesthetically the procedure of the courts is more refined."

Long before it became respectable to mention such things, Cohen argued against the hypocrisy of the legal orthodoxy centered in the axiom that judges declare but do not make law. His interest in the judicial function was first stimulated in the early years of the century by the course of decisions in labor cases. The "arbitrary (and often unenlightened) character" of these decisions revealed to him the inadequacy of the dogma that judges are legal phonographs. Judges are influenced by economic and social theories and prejudices; and no study of the law should ignore or fail to evaluate economic and social interests and forces. The judicial process has a human aspect. These and similar statements are commonplace today, but early in the century it took courage to make them. When they became commonplace, Cohen began to point to the opposite pole, which was being neglected; namely, that idealism, tradition, and fixity of rule have a necessary and justifiable place in the judicial process.

In the early years of his interest in jurisprudence and the philosophy

of law Cohen found intellectual stimulation from American scholars and thinkers like Roscoe Pound, John Dewey, and Felix Adler, but chiefly Cohen found stimulation from the writings of continental thinkers. That he studied these writings well and beneficially can be easily seen from a reading of *Law and the Social Order*.

Professional legal scholars soon became aware of Cohen, and when the Association of American Law Schools appointed an editorial committee to translate, edit, and publish the Modern Legal Philosophy series, consisting of many volumes of continental masterworks on jurisprudence and the philosophy of the law, Cohen, although neither a lawyer nor a teacher of law, was made a member of the committee, of which Dean John H. Wigmore was chairman. The tradition and work of that committee continue today in the program of the new committee of the association which is translating, editing, and publishing the Twentieth Century Legal Philosophy series.

In 1913 Cohen organized the Conference on Legal and Social Philosophy, the chairmanship of which was taken by John Dewey. The conference held four meetings, each of which attracted outstanding scholars. The meetings stimulated discussion and thought and underscored the need for radical and fresh thinking in legal and social philosophy. The Conference on Legal and Social Philosophy and the *New Republic*, founded in 1914, were forums from which Cohen's influence effectively emanated. Holmes and Cardozo, Brandeis and Frankfurter, Learned Hand, Roscoe Pound, and Harold Laski, American courts, philosophers and men of public affairs felt and responded to that influence.

V

"Like science, liberalism insists on a critical examination of the content of all our beliefs, principles, or intitial hypotheses," Cohen has said, "and on subjecting them to a continuous process of verification so that they will be progressively better founded in experience and reason." It was socialism, he said, that offered the specific occasion for his entering upon a study of technical philosophy, for socialism seemed to him to offer "the only scientific analysis of the economic evils and political corruption of our age as well as of the main course of human history." The 1896 campaign of Bryan stirred in Cohen a deep interest in politics. Cohen was then teaching workingmen's classes as part of his work for Daniel de

Leon's Socialist Labor Party. In 1897 he campaigned for Henry George who ran in the New York mayoralty election. This was also the time when Cohen belonged to a Marxist study group. He never ceased to be grateful for the illumination he found in a study of *Das Kapital*. "It not only helped me to recognize the poverty of most noneconomic interpretations of history," he said, "but also prepared me to see that the recurrent breakdowns of capitalist economy are not unforeseeable accidents but a consequence of the private ownership of the machinery of production. . . . It helped me to see that the old optimistic but essentially anarchistic notion that the good of all will best be promoted by 'rugged individualism,' by each pursuing his own selfish economic gain, is a cruel superstition which men possessed of both reason and a decent amount of human sympathy cannot long maintain in the face of the hideous miseries that flourish in the shadow of men's mighty productive powers."

On the other hand he was repelled by the exaggerated materialism that pervaded Marx's thinking. This materialism was evident at many points in Marxism; it was especially evident, said Cohen, "in the Marxist boast, which I could not swallow, that Marx never spoke of justice."

All his life Cohen maintained an active interest in social problems and social reform. Social injustices aroused his hatred and put him in a fighting mood. He never forgave Roosevelt's imposition of the embargo against the Spanish Republic. Always taking his stand for freedom of thought and inquiry, freedom of discussion and criticism, he opposed communism and the Russian dictatorship. He did not believe that the "proletarian" dictatorship was necessary as a "temporary" expedient: "The plea that the denial of freedom is a temporary necessity is advanced by all militarists. It ignores the fact that, when suppression becomes a habit, it is not readily abandoned. . . . When the Communists tell me that I must choose between their dictatorship and fascism, I feel that I am offered the choice between being shot and being hanged. It would be suicide for liberal civilization to accept this as exhausting the field of human possibility."

In his social philosophy, too, Cohen used the principle of polarity. There must be the principle of order and the principle of freedom; opposing groups must co-operate, for each group must be wise enough "to see the necessity of compromising with those with whom we have to live together and whom we cannot or do not wish to exterminate";

not all property should be communal, nor may an individual use his property in antisocial ways.

Principles of social aims and policy should not be posited as fixed dogmas; they should be viewed as "provisional hypotheses, to be tried with as much intelligence and persistence as we can summon, but never without watching their consequences to see whether these hypotheses are really confirmed."

A fundamental tenet of his liberalism is that an individual may never assume that he has the whole truth in his possession. Moral humility, tolerance, a belief in the scientific method, freedom of speech and inquiry —a faith in these qualities of mind and action was at the heart of his liberalism.

He did not believe in the inevitability of progress; with Justice Holmes he said that effort is one of the ways through which the inevitable comes to pass. His philosophy of liberalism was satisfied with the mere possibility of progress. But this mere possibility is all a man needs to provide the moral strength for his will, to engage in the fight for social reform. No social cause, however, will bring about universal salvation. The achievement of universal suffrage, popular education, or some other end greatly desired brings in its train new disappointments. But despair is not a permanent state of the emotions; new waves of hope arise, and so human history swings between the pole of growth and the pole of decay, between the pole of hope and the pole of despair. Cohen's liberalism stands between these poles: it is not a set of dogmas or doctrines, but a process, a temper of mind. It means an open eye for alternatives, a questioning of all "self-evident" propositions, a faith in enlightenment "yet colored with a deep humility before the vision of a world so much larger than our human hopes and thoughts"; a readiness for new risks in new situations, "in which there is no guarantee that the new will always be the good or the true, in which progress is a precarious achievement rather than an inevitability"; a liberation of "the energies of human nature by the free and fearless use of reason."

In this social philosophy as in his philosophy of nature and in his philosophy of law, Cohen saw the operations of the principles of polarity: there is the opening up of new situations with new challenges, but this activity should be the result of disciplined intelligence rather than of arbitrary forces; for social life "involves a balance between the expansive

or centrifugal forces which make for diversity and adventure, and the constraining or centripetal forces which make for organization and safety. . . . The life of civilization, like the life of each organism, oscillates between opposite extremes."

VI

Cohen's interest in Jewish history began when he was still a young lad subject to the influence of his grandfather, and his interest remained a lively one all his life. His significant essay, "Philosophies of Jewish History" in *Jewish Social Studies,* is one of the fruits of his devotion to this subject. Cohen has said that piety as defined by Santayana—"reverence for the sources of one's being"—is but a necessary corollary of the Socratic maxim "Know thyself." For a Jew to know himself, he must know intimately the history of the Jewish people.

Cohen's mother tongue was Yiddish, and for this language he always maintained a special love: "no other language," he admitted, "ever entirely replaced it in the expression of intimate affection." He said that he owed a great deal of his education to the Yiddish press: "It taught me to look at world news from a cosmopolitan instead of a local or provincial point of view, and it taught me to interpret politics realistically, instead of being misled by empty phrases."

After his confirmation at the age of thirteen he gave up belief in a personal God, and at the age of nineteen discontinued all ritual observances. He rejected all forms of theism because, he said, he was not able to reconcile the reality of evil with the idea of a benevolent and omnipotent deity.

Nor did he accept Zionism. "I should like to see Palestine, and all its inhabitants, grow in wealth," he said. "I have the deepest admiration for the brave and wise efforts through which Jewish pioneers have rescued the soil of Israel from centuries of neglect and abuse. I should like to see the racial or religious discriminations with which the British exclude Jewish immigrants and restrict Jewish land ownership broken, just as I should like to see similar discriminations in our own land broken. I should, above all, like to see the Hebrew University become a beacon of light throughout the world." A politically-Zionist Palestine would not have free non-Jewish immigration; it would be a state founded on a peculiar race or people, a tribal religion, and a mystic belief in a peculiar soil; there would be no separation of church and state, no free mixing

of races or peoples. "Tribalism," he said, "is a creed that leads to grief and massacre, whether it bears the label of Zionism, Aryanism, Anglo-Saxon America, or Pan-Islam." Although he rejected political Zionism and Judaism as a theology, Cohen also rejected assimilationism.

When Cohen began to teach at City College in 1902, and for thirty-six years thereafter, his students were predominantly Jewish boys. He shared their struggles against the discrimination that so many of them faced as they sought to establish themselves in careers. As a citizen he felt he could not be silent "in the face of the great campaign to repudiate the declaration that all men are created equal which culminated in the racist immigration laws of 1922 and 1924." In the early 1920's he became active in the vocational training work of the ORT. Later, in 1939, he became president of the Jewish Occupational Council. These affiliations should not suggest that Cohen believed that Jews should seek careers and employment in which their "visibility" in public life would be relatively small, and thus points of irritation leading to anti-semitism would be reduced in number. Why should Americans object to Norwegian immigrants, possessing a maritime tradition, supplying more than their proportionate numbers to American shipping? "If the traditional Jewish love of learning is of value to a liberal civilization, is it not better for the Jews to maintain it, and perhaps transmit it to other portions of the population, rather than retreat from it as a source of danger?"

When Cohen heard of the pogroms in Czarist Russia and later of the massacres by the Nazis, it was natural for him to recognize that, but for the good luck and fortitude of his parents, he and those dearest to him might have been among the victims. He always sought for ways to identify himself with fellow Jews, and not to let differences in religious belief or politics stand in the way of practical co-operation. Believing in division of labor, he felt that he could best make his contribution by concentrating on some scientific pursuit. In the fight against injustice and cruelty facts and an understanding of facts are necessary, useful weapons. In 1933 he, therefore, organized the Conference on Jewish Relations, with which he was closely identified until the time of his death. Not long after he organized the Conference on Jewish Relations, he took a leading role in the establishment of the *Jewish Social Studies,* a quarterly that has won for itself a distinguished place among learned sociological and Jewish journals.

Although Cohen gave up a belief in a personal God, he did not give up the "ideal of holiness that enables us to distinguish between the good and evil in men and thus saves us from the idolatrous worship of a humanity that is full of imperfections." He might have called this "ideal of holiness" by the name of God, but he did not want to cause confusion or be misunderstood. He never returned to any supernatural beliefs, but if by religion is understood what he called "the realm of ideal expression," Cohen was a religious man. Atheists, he said, are as a rule singularly blind "to the limitations of our knowledge and to the infinite possibilities beyond us. And those who called themselves materialists appeared to me to be shutting themselves off from philosophy, wisdom, and the life of the spirit, which are certainly not material things. Those of my circle who rejected religion *in toto* seemed to me to be casting away the ideals that had sustained our people [the Jewish people] through so many generations before we had fashioned guideposts to our own lives that could stand up against the sort of buffetings that the old guideposts had withstood. In this some of us lost sight of the larger view that Thomas Davidson had taught, that we have no right to break away from the past until we have appropriated all its experience and wisdom and that reverence for the past may go hand in hand with loyalty to the future, 'to the Kingdom which doth not yet appear.' " In Spinoza he saw a kindred spirit and in Spinoza's writings he found most clearly developed "the rational and tolerant attitude to the values of religion" for which he had been searching. If "religion consists in humility (as a sense of infinite powers beyond our scope), charity or love (as a sense of the mystic potency in our fellow human beings), and spirituality (as a sense of the limitations of all that is merely material, actual or even attainable), then no one was more deeply religious than Spinoza." In these passages Cohen is describing not only Spinoza's religion, but also his own. In his later years Cohen came to view with more sympathy the role of religious ritual. Although he never went back to supernaturalism, he came to appreciate and enjoy the religious symbolism "in which is celebrated the human need of trusting to the larger vision."

The "larger vision" of Professor Cohen, especially after his retirement from the professorship at City College, encompassed many fields of interest. His eye saw through a "dome of many-colored glass." He was a whole man; he sought the truth, and was willing to open many doors in

his search. Logical analysis was one door; scientific method was another door; history and tradition were also doors; active devotion to humanitarian causes was still another door; defense of freedom was another door; a religion of humility, charity or love, and spirituality was also a door. He did not always see all doors at one and the same time. But what man does? He always sought, however, the larger vision, and more often than is given to others he had the fortune to see his "father's mansion" in its totality. Yet can one say honestly that any mortal sees this totality? No; Cohen would say, no. For there is a "Kingdom which doth not yet appear"; there are "those human values that the process of time can never adequately realize or destroy." As his teacher William James said in *A Pluralistic Universe:* "the word 'and' trails along after every sentence. Something always escapes. 'Ever not quite' has to be said of the best attempts made anywhere in the universe at attaining all-inclusiveness." Morris Raphael Cohen did not always agree with William James, but Cohen himself could have written these sentences. He had a sense of the infinite powers beyond any man's scope. His favorite form of expression was the question; his life was a quest. He worshipped no God, yet, like young Samuel, he lived a dedicated life. In the company of Morris Raphael Cohen he felt, Mr. Justice Holmes once said, the presence of a holy man.

A STORY

GARDEN OF EDEN

By ELIOT L. WAGNER

THE SHOW WAS OVER, and Natchez, with the rest of the crowd, filed out of the balcony reserved for Negroes.

He had been living quietly, working nights, and afternoons watching longshoremen load and unload cargoes at the riverfront. Then Slick Lewis and his band came to The City. Something had made him go to the theater. He had been in and around New Orleans all his life, and he guessed he hadn't seen Slick for twenty, twenty-five years.

Now he had seen Slick, heard Slick play the clarinet, and he was choked up with dissatisfaction—not with Slick, but with himself. He tried to shed the feeling. He even told himself it would be nice to go backstage and say hello to Slick.

He trudged around to the stage entrance, where an elderly white man in a grey uniform sat in a chair tilted back against the wall, reading a morning paper. He saw Natchez, but continued reading until he had finished his column.

When the guard was ready, Natchez said, "Yes, sir. I like to see Slick Lewis."

The guard stared at him blankly, pretending to misunderstand. "You go around the front and pay four bits. Lewis goes on again about two hours."

"Yes, sir. I like to see Slick Lewis in his dressing room."

The doorman looked him over. He was squarely built, not young: his mouth was sunken. He had on a dark suit that was neat, but worn.

"Maybe if you tell him my name," Natchez ventured.

"Come on, boy," the guard said crossly, as though Natchez had kept him waiting. "I ain't got all day. What *is* your name?"

Boy. That sounded like Brotherton, over at Gibson's, where he worked. He thought of turning away, but replied instead, "You can tell him Johnny Natchez."

The doorman folded his paper, placed it under his arm, and shuffled off, grumbling. However, he delivered the message, and returned with one for Natchez.

"All right, boy, this way."

He pointed to a flight of stairs.

"Down them steps. Turn right, and three doors down on the far side."

Inside the theater, Natchez caught a faint whiff of beaverboard and glue and paint. Like the old days, when he himself still played. Done and gone.

He knocked at the third door, and there, in a white dressing robe, with open arms and a wide grin, was Slick Lewis, not quite the same as he had been years ago, but still Slick all right.

Slick clutched his shoulders, and cried, "Johnny, where you been all my life?"

Natchez' discontent receded, and was replaced by pleasure at seeing Slick. He sat down heavily at the end of a woven cane couch that half-filled the little room. At that, his own room on Rampart Street was no larger.

"Where I been?" he smiled wryly. "Right down here, in dear old New Orleans."

Slick nodded wisely. "What I tell you years ago, huh? What I tell you, Johnny? What I tell you when Morton ask you to go to Chicago? I tell you go! What I tell you when Joe Oliver ask you, and ask me too? I tell you, come on, Johnny, we going to Chicago! The City dead, The City all played out!"

Slick's eyes were bright, as if the years had been rolled back, and his words were new. And he had been right: not too long afterward the ones who had made the mistake of staying found it a matter of drifting from poor jobs to worse jobs to no jobs. Natchez took to drinking more than he ate; by the time his teeth were really bad, he could no longer afford to have them repaired. All there was left then to do was to hock the clarinet for one last big drunk, which he did.

He gazed at the floor, his pleasure at meeting Slick already dissipated.

"I don't think of that no more," he said. "That all done with and gone. . . . How Joe getting along, anyhow?"

Slick stared. "Why Johnny, ain't you never heard? Joe Oliver dead."

Natchez raised his head. "Joe dead?"

"Sure. Joe got bad breaks. Sure. He was setting them up in a bowling alley before he died."

"Joe, in a bowling alley? Then it didn't make no difference, Joe going to Chicago."

"Tough luck. It wasn't nothing else."

"How about Morton?"

Slick shook his head. "You picking all the losers, man. He dead too. . . . Now how about something alive? How did you like my act?"

Natchez nodded gloomily. "Yeah. That was alive all right."

Slick prodded his arm. "Say, what do you mean—all right?"

Natchez shrugged. Slick's playing had been different in the old days when five or six men got together in a band and played jazz. He had just seen Slick in front of a twenty-man orchestra: all notes and no heart. Slick himself was different: what was it? He was . . . Fat. Yeah. There was a little layer of fat around Slick. Not too much. Just enough to change his looks, his talk, his playing.

"You getting fat, Slick," Natchez said drily.

Slick patted his stomach. "That's prosperity, man."

"You making good money?" asked Natchez.

"Why, I'm the tops, Johnny! Don't you hear nothing down here in dear old New Orleans?"

And then it sprang from Natchez before he realized fully that it had been in him. "Well if you doing so good, why you have to come down here to a theater where your people sit up on a shelf like some kind of animal?"

Slick extracted a cigarette from a silver case, tapped it reflectively against his wrist, put it in his mouth, lighted it with a silver lighter, inhaled deeply, and began to blow smoke rings. After the fifth ring, he said quietly, "You a big race man now, Johnny. I never knew that."

Natchez rose.

"How you making out, Johnny?" asked Slick, his eyes examining Natchez' clothing. "You working?"

Natchez sighed. "Yeah. I'm working."

"Where you at? I like to catch you before I leave town."

Catch him: that was just what Slick wanted to do. But Slick would have to get a lot smarter for that. He answered without hesitation, "Over on Bienville Street. Danny Gibson's."

The two faced each other, Natchez stedfastly, Slick suspiciously. Suddenly Slick melted. He waved his arm. "Johnny, what we talking like this after we been apart so long?" He threw off his robe, and began to button his shirt. "You and me, we go out for a drink, and really talk over old times. . . . I got a date coming here, but I'll beat it out, leave a message for her. Meet her later, that's what I'll do. I'm going out with my old friend Johnny Natchez." He bubbled with activity, quickly knotting his tie and slipping into his light tan jacket.

Too late. The date entered, without knocking.

Both men turned. She was an attractive, light-skinned woman, with regular features.

Slick looked helplessly at Natchez, and said to the woman, "I want you to meet Mr. Natchez. He taught me everything I know." And to Natchez. "This is . . . my wife."

The woman smiled.

Natchez nodded. "Pleased to meet you, ma'am. . . . Well, so long, Slick."

Slick grasped his arm. "Johnny, I'm awful sorry I can't make it now. But I look you up tonight between shows. Danny Gibson's, on Bienville Street."

"Sûre," said Natchez, extending his hand, "but just in case you don't make it, so long, and say hello to the boys for me, any of them still alive."

"You a crazy man, Johnny," Slick said, squeezing Natchez' hand.

Outside, Natchez rubbed the sunken, toothless mouth that Slick hadn't noticed. Slick saw clothes, not people. Old suit meant you was bad off. Never got far inside things, and that was a good break for Slick. Dumber you are the better off you are. Sure wouldn't want to have that Slick see him mopping up behind the bar in Gibson's. He could hear Slick telling the ones who hadn't died: "Run into Johnny Natchez down in New Orleans, and he tell me to look him up where he works. So I go there, and what do you know? Natchez a porter in a cheap night club!" Nothing to be afraid of, though. Slick too busy with his woman.

He thought of his own wife, in Sparta, fifty miles north. Each week he sent her whatever was left over from the little he made. They didn't get along any more, but he felt that he owed it to her. She had stuck with him when he was down and out. Then he thought again of Slick's woman. Why kid himself? He envied Slick.

* * *

Gibson's did have a small, Negro band: six men, and a girl who sang. Natchez, that night, took the precaution of telling the leader, "Pops, if a fellow by the name Slick Lewis ask for me, you tell him I'm home sick. He think I play the clarinet here."

"*You* know Slick Lewis?" said the leader.

"Yeah," said Natchez, the side of his mouth twisting, "I know him."

And yet, what did he want from Slick? Did he want Slick to say, "Johnny, you in bad shape, so I got a good scheme. We become partners. You follow me round and watch me play, and we share my money . . . ?" Ah, there was nothing wrong with Slick. It was himself who was wrong, inside and out.

Slick didn't come.

After the night club was open for a few hours, Natchez forgot about him. As he balanced a wire basket of dirty glasses against the edge of the bar sink, letting the water drain off, he listened to the girl in the band sing.

> Way down yonder in New Orleans,
> In the land of dreamy dreams,
> It's a garden of Eden,
> For you and for me. . . .

She was lousy and the band was lousy, the clarinet especially. Plenty noise and no ideas. But it was good enough for the crowd, the White Folks. They never listened anyhow, good or bad.

He carried the basket to the kitchen, returned with a load of clean glasses, and then slunk out the back for a smoke. The courtyard was dark, and quiet except for the hum of the city. He could hear faintly the band's percussion.

Now, he thought, how them solos go I used to play? He tapped his foot: that was the rhythm. He tried in his mind to work out the round notes of a clarinet. Nothing happened. That was funny. He tried

again, but still he could imagine nothing. In a panic he stomped out his cigarette and rushed back to the voices and clatter of the kitchen. At once he felt better. Got a tired brain. Can't work out no clarinet parts practicing on a mop.

"Hey, Natchez!"

It was the manager, a tall, thin white man named Brotherton, with a sallow, scowling face.

"Yes, sir."

"Where you been? Come on, boy, get your mop. . . ."

Natchez obeyed. He'd done some low work the last few years, but he guessed he was at the bottom now, working for Brotherton. The dissatisfaction that had oppressed him on seeing Slick Lewis filled him again.

Early morning. He stretched himself out on his cot, too tired to sleep, and lay for hours with a dried-up feeling in his chest. Got to get out of this somehow. Got to get back on that clarinet. Fifty-seven. Ain't too old to juggle chairs and tables, and push a mop. Why too old to blow a clarinet?

He saw himself once more on the bandstand, crowds of people jamming the dancehall to hear him play.

He fell asleep happy, and awoke with the knowledge that he had something important on his mind. When he remembered what it was, the old depression swept over him. What was he to do, how was he to begin again now, after years of not playing?

No. That was what happened all the time: think big and do nothing. What had to be done first? Get teeth. He couldn't play the clarinet with his gums.

There was a dentist he knew of, a colored boy, who had an office over a store a few doors away. He got dressed, and went there. The dentist was near the window, watching the shoppers pass below. Natchez coughed, and he turned.

"Didn't hear you come in," he said.

He was young, thin, and very dark. How can he refuse me? Natchez thought. He had intended to tell the dentist first how he had put off going for years because he never had the money, but the dentist motioned him to the chair, and he said nothing.

The dentist examined him. "You need complete dentures," he said.

"I know," answered Natchez. "That why I come."

The dentist placed his instruments on the tray, and paused. Then he said, "You know how much that would cost?" And he told him. Natchez had had a vague expectation of arranging weekly payments, but his earnings for six months would hardly cover what was asked. The dentist watched him, and saw his chapfallen expression.

"Well, what do you want me to do?" the dentist asked pleasantly.

Natchez shrugged.

The dentist smiled. "Now tell me this: you come in here, I don't know you, never saw you before. I don't ask you your name. I don't ask who recommended you. Is that business? Is that the American way of doing things? I ask you." He picked up his probe from the tray, still smiling, and said, "Now tell me truthfully. Didn't you come in here to me thinking, this boy is one of my people. In fact, he's blacker than I am. He won't talk to me about money. Isn't that what you came in thinking?"

"Not exactly, son, but you pretty close."

The dentist's smile disappeared. "Well I can't do it!" he exclaimed. "I can't do it, see! And the beautiful part of it is that I don't have a moral problem any more. I just can't pay for the materials. I'm broke. If I make enough to pay for this roach-infested hole and my meals, I'm lucky! And you don't know what I went through, how hard I worked, night and day, to get this rotten, useless diploma." He shook his head, distraught. "You haven't any idea. . . ."

Natchez gazed out the window. "You wrong there, son. I got a pretty good idea how it is. Hard times now for us folks. Maybe it get better later on."

"I hope I live that long," the young man said bitterly.

"Well, anyways, I come back when I got the dough saved up."

"I'm sorry," said the dentist, turning again to the window. "That's how things are."

Natchez returned to his room and lay down. Funny. He hadn't got what he wanted, yet his mind felt relieved of its burden. There was nothing now for him to do until six o'clock, the time he reported for work.

* * *

Months passed. There was a pleasurable quiet in being alone, working, and being alone again. It was like a coma: the pulse of life becomes

more and more faint, but pain has ceased. Natchez no longer thought of the clarinet. After the nights at Gibson's, he fell asleep as soon as he reached his bed.

He finished his last chore one night and was about to leave, when Brotherton called him. He walked slowly across the dance floor to the cashier's desk where the manager was standing.

Brotherton thumbed toward the cigar counter, saying, "Clean up that case."

Natchez stared.

Brotherton's face twisted. "Well, come on, boy, clean it up!"

Natchez swallowed, and went behind the bar for a damp rag. The counter took only a moment to wipe; the cashier usually did it. Natchez removed his apron, folded it, placed it on the shelf in the kitchen, and started again to leave. Brotherton called after him.

"Here's some mail for you." He tossed an envelope to Natchez, but it fell short. As Natchez bent to pick it up, Brotherton chuckled. "You know how to read?" he asked.

Natchez thrust the letter into his pocket and walked out without looking at Brotherton. He felt mad at himself, and entered a saloon near where he lived. He had several drinks, his first liquor in almost two years.

Then he went to his room, feeling better. He lay down, letting his arm dangle at the side of the bed, and tapped his fingers softly on the floor. Without his forcing it, a clarinet solo wound sinuously through chorus after chorus in his mind. He still heard the melody in the distance as he fell asleep.

In the morning he tried to recall it, but he couldn't. I sure had it last night, he thought. If I ever got a clarinet. . . .

He went downstairs for a loaf of bread, and when paying the baker, discovered the letter in his pocket. Brotherton. He opened the envelope in the street, and read as he walked in the hot, sticky sun that was drenching the city.

> Dear Mr. Natchez—
>
> Regards from Slick Lewis. I met him here in New York the other night, and he told me that he saw you while he was in New Orleans, and that you're working in the place to which I've addressed this letter.
>
> I feel as if I know you quite well (I'll explain why), but first let me introduce myself so that you'll understand why you've received a letter from

a stranger. I became interested in jazz while I was going to Amherst. But don't think I'm a college boy—that was about twenty years ago. I've always been fairly well off through no fault of my own, and since I liked jazz music so much and got to play it pretty well myself (piano), I decided that I could do worse than devote my time to it. Jazz may not be all the outstanding music this country has produced, but I dare say it's the bulk of it. Consequently, for the last ten or fifteen years I've been getting recording groups together, playing myself, arranging for tours of good jazz men, etc.

Now, Mr. Natchez, I do not know whether you're aware of it, but there's at least one paragraph on you in every book about jazz. Since you never made any records, you've about become a legendary figure. I myself have been for years asking men who knew you long ago in New Orleans for clues to your whereabouts. No one knew what had happened to you. We didn't even know whether or not you were alive, until Slick got here with this big news.

Now that we have located you, the only thing I can think of is getting you to make some records. What collector's items they will be! I don't know how to tell you what they would mean to me and to other lovers of jazz music—records by John Natchez, one of the great clarinettists of all time, the man who taught Slick Lewis!

Let me know, please, all about what you're doing. Can you come to New York? If that's possible, I'll wire fare at once, and expenses. If not, tell me, and we can try to make other arrangements.

The letter was signed Lloyd Wilcox, over a New York City address.

After Natchez had read and made out most of it, a throb of pleasure rose in his throat and he laughed aloud. *Great clarinettists of all time!* He stopped to reread the letter. People passing stared and jostled him. He didn't care. He edged his way to the curb and soaked himself in Wilcox' praise.

He bought a sheet of paper, an envelope, and a stamp, and rushed back to his room to write. But as he sat clutching his stub of pencil, the stream of joyful ideas with which he wanted to cover the paper became stopped up. Wilcox' letter had made him believe a while in the lie he had told Slick: that he was still playing. What could he say?

He wrote, finally, the following note:

Dear Mr. Wilcox:

I am sure happy to hear of you, and what you said. I never knew anything about them books and how good I was. I mean, I was good all right, but I

never knew about them books. I sure like to meet you some day and if you ever down here in The City would want you to look me up. I can't get to New York right now, but if that ever change I let you know. Say hello to Slick and all the boys.

Yrs truly,
John Natchez.

Brotherton, that night, found something else for him to do when he was supposed to leave. He did it without objecting. They wrote him up in books! What would Brotherton say to that?

One thing, though, puzzled him: that was how Slick had made friends with such a high-class, educated colored man.

* * *

Night after night Brotherton piled it on, and Natchez did what he was told. Then he received a second letter.

Dear Mr. Natchez—

I'm sorry that you can't come up to New York, because this is the spot for jazz music today. But you don't have to ask me twice to look you up.

A friend of mine whom you don't know, Harry Meredith, is a top-notch drummer. I've talked him into coming with me to New Orleans to make some records with you—that is, if you have no objection. I hope you haven't, because a series of records with the label John Natchez trio will be enough of a reward for me. However, I'm not trying to pretend that going South will cost me even a nickel, because every jazz enthusiast in the country will be after copies of those records. It's true they're a small minority, but for our purposes there are enough of them.

I also hope to convince you to come up to New York with me. Besides seeing a lot of your old friends [*here he mentioned several whom Natchez had not heard of for years*], I think you can make good money—better money, probably, than where you are now.

Meredith is working now, but we'll be on our way with recording equipment as soon as he can get a substitute for himself. That may take a little time, because he's one of the best young drummers to come along in quite a while. You may wonder why I have to have him along. It's simply that I don't want to take a chance on trying to find a drummer in New Orleans and winding up with a fifth-rater. I'm told that good men are very hard to find in your city now. It's a shame, considering what New Orleans used to be for jazz—but there's nothing anyone can do about that.

I'm looking forward to the pleasure of meeting you.

Natchez read this in his room, and after he had finished began to pace back and forth. He'd got himself into it: how was he going to get out? The truth now would make him look more foolish than if he had told it in the first place. Tell Wilcox not to come. Easy to say. But he had to think of a reason. He sat on the edge of the bed, his head cupped in his hands. He stood up, and began again to pace.

"Now, just a minute," he said aloud. "Take it easy, man. Don't go off your nut. You got to think of something. O.K. You got time. Wait. When some excuse come to you, you write it to this damn Wilcox."

But he remained uneasy. At work, Brotherton smiled and said, "Evening, Natchez."

What was behind that? Better let me be tonight, because I ain't in no mood . . .

Natchez kept busy, but he couldn't drive the letter from his thoughts; nor could he think of an answer.

When it was time to go, he eyed Brotherton warily. Brotherton was busy with the receipts. Natchez walked to the door.

"Hey," said Brotherton, "where you think you're going?"

"Guess I go home, Mr. Brotherton."

"Who said *you* was finished? Come here, boy. See that woodwork there?" He pointed to the walnut paneling behind the cashier's desk. "Rub that down before you go."

How bad I want this job? Natchez asked himself, and decided that he didn't want it at all.

"My working day is over, Mr. Brotherton."

Brotherton leaned on his elbows over the counter, and gazed quizzically at Natchez, an amused expression on his face.

"What you mean by that, boy?"

"What I mean is plain enough, Mr. Brotherton," Natchez replied. One of the bartenders, a Negro, stood watching, aghast. "I ain't rubbing down no woodwork tonight," Natchez concluded.

"I guess I better pay you off," said Brotherton.

Natchez nodded. "Yes, sir. That suit me fine."

"Now," said Brotherton, "you got four days coming. That's seven dollars and eighty-four cents." He counted out the sum from the cash register. "Now, let's see if I got it right. There's five." He threw a bill to the floor. "Six, seven. . . ." Two more bills fluttered downward. The

coins followed, rolling, one after the other, to the perimeter of the dance floor near the bandstand. "Now," said Brotherton, "you got two minutes to beat it the hell out of here."

Natchez gathered the money and left. Outside, the bartender caught up to him.

"What you have to act so big with him, Johnny?" asked the bartender. "You never get another job around here now."

"I don't want no other job around here. I'm leaving this city, and I hope I never see it again."

"Yeah? Where you going?"

"Sparta. That's my home."

"What you going to do up there?" asked the bartender. "Work the fields?"

"Nah. I get something else. Had enough of the fields. Worked the rice and cane for two years. No more of that for me."

They walked some distance along Canal Street, quiet now under its double row of lights. Finally Natchez said, "Well, I turn here."

The bartender touched his sleeve. "What you say we get a drink on it?"

Natchez shook his head. "Nah. No drinks for me. A half pint inside me and I wind up on a rope for sure, cause if I don't go back and murder that Brotherton, it'll be the first white man I see. . . . I tell you, man, the way I feel, I can't bear to even look at none of them."

"Yeah," said the bartender. "Yeah. . . . Well, good luck, Johnny."

"Yeah," said Natchez. They shook hands.

Walking alone through the streets, Natchez thought over all the abuse he had taken from Brotherton, and wondered why tonight's incident had been particularly the one to make him quit.

In his room, he rolled his few belongings into a bundle, reread Wilcox' last letter, and tore it up. "That one worry off my mind. I'm going tomorrow, Wilcox, so there ain't no answer needed. Anyways, it just as good you ain't coming down here. You wouldn't like it down here anyhow."

At dawn he boarded a bus for Sparta. He took the window seat in the last row, closed his eyes, and dozed. The bus stopped two hours later in the main square of Sparta, about a mile from where Natchez lived. He walked sleepily through the awakening town, passing pretty little

vine-trellised houses, set back behind lawns and flower beds. After a half mile he crossed Race Street, where the Negro section began. The houses became shabbier; the pavement curled into the ground and disappeared.

But Natchez lived much further on. His home was a shanty. The early morning sun enshadowed the road before it, and made the porch, three steps up, look cool and washed.

His wife wasn't there. Probably out cleaning for the White Folks. He tossed his bundle to one of the two battered chairs, lay down on the sagging bed that filled up half the room, and fell asleep. . . .

Before he opened his eyes, he knew she was looking down at him. He squinted first at the floor. From the way the sun slanted, he guessed it was late afternoon. He raised his lids.

She was a dark, sullen woman, with sunken cheeks and deep hollows under her eyes.

"So you back," she said.

"Yeah," he yawned, stretching, "don't sound so glad."

She didn't reply. He rose, took from his pocket what remained of his pay, and gave it to her. "Here," he said.

She counted the money. "Guess I don't have to work no more now."

Natchez breathed deeply. "You know one thing? I said, you know one thing? I'm back, missus, and I ain't got no idea when I'm leaving. Furthermore, I ain't got no mind to spend no more time arguing with you."

She started away from him, but he caught her arm. "Now you wait right here, missus, and listen to what I got to say. I make a buck, you get it. You got what I been sending you? O.K. No more of this back biting. We getting too old for that. . . . What I say suit you?"

"Yeah," she answered, "that suit me. Only don't you go. . . . Never mind. That suit me."

"O.K. Now I got something to ask you. Answer me straight, see—no trimming. I ain't going back to no fields. You hear about any job in town?"

She placed a few sticks of wood into the stove, and began to prepare supper. "One job there," she said. "Tailor in town asking for a colored man to do his pressing. . . . How come you left The City? Something down there you didn't like?"

"Yeah. The White Folks. They got a hundred times as many of them down there as up here. . . . What you cooking there?"

She turned from the stove. "What I tell you before you run off and go down there again?"

He raised his hand. "O.K. I remember good and well what you tell me, and you was right. You so right I ain't arguing with you."

He looked out the doorway. Barefooted children were playing in the road. When they ran, the dust spattered under their heels and formed cloudlets in the dry, hot air. He suddenly thought of something, and went to his pack, from which he extracted Wilcox's first letter.

"Here," he said, "read that."

She leaned her head to a side, and slowly puzzled out the words. "Well, what about it? I can't make no sense out of it."

He snatched the letter from her. "You make out the part about me, you make that out all right, don't you? The part where I'm one of the best clarinets of all time?"

She returned to the stove, waving her hand backward at him. "You talking about what you was, not what you now."

He seized her shoulder, the corner of his mouth tremulous. "That just what I don't want to hear from you, understand?"

He held her a moment, watching her cower. Then, calm again, he released her. "There just ain't no use trying to talk to you, missus," he said.

The following morning he went into town, applied at the tailor's, and was taken on. He stood all day in the back of the store, working over a steam iron. The tailor, a short man with a ring of dry, dishevelled hair crowning a bald spot, worked in the front, and said little to him. In the evening, Natchez sat with neighbors, listening to their talk, smoking a few cigarettes. And he still had Wilcox's letter to look at occasionally. The days of quiet seemed to have set in again.

They lasted a month.

One afternoon, while he was working, two white men entered and began to talk to the tailor. A drape, hanging on rings, partly covered the door frame connecting the two halves of the store, but Natchez saw enough of the men to tell they were strangers. He was about to resume ironing, when one of them, a tall, stout man, mentioned his name. John Natchez!

His knees became so weak he had to lean for support against the ironing board. He couldn't hear what they were saying, but the stout man was looking directly at him. He swallowed, and tried to think. What did the cops want with *him?* Brotherton. Brotherton must have cooked up something to sick the police after him. He hadn't done anything. But it could have been for something anyone had done!

They were still talking. The second man was middle-sized, thin, and much younger. If he knocked down the little one first, he might be able to run for it. . . . No. What was he thinking? He licked his lips. His tongue felt dry. The back window. He'd wait. If they started for him, he'd dive out the back window. The big one was showing the tailor some kind of paper. Natchez poised himself. He was ready now. He'd duck down State Street and head for the fields.

The strangers turned and walked out of the store.

The tailor stepped on the pedal of his machine, and the motor began to hum spasmodically. Natchez stepped against the wall, where he couldn't be seen from the front. He leaned there a second, and then sank slowly to his haunches and began to laugh soundlessly, his toothless mouth open wide and his head rocking back and forth. When he recovered, he felt as though he had been sick.

The tailor said nothing about the strangers as the day wore on. Natchez worked past his quitting time, and left only when the tailor said, "O.K., Natchez. You done enough for today."

He walked out slowly, his eyes fixed, looking neither left nor right.

At the corner they moved into his range of vision. He waited, with shoulders slumped, too tired to run.

The stout one said, "Mr. Natchez?"

Mister? From a white man? He shook his head in confusion. He saw them hazily, exchanging glances in front of him. Sparta. The sidewalk, sun beating down hot. He was there all right. They were there. But it was too much for him. "O.K., O.K., O.K. . . ." he heard himself repeating.

The stout one was talking again, mentioning names: Wilcox, Meredith, names in the letters he knew by heart. Now he was offering Natchez a sheet of paper. A scrawl swam before his eyes, steadied itself, and froze into a script he recognized: his own. Mouth agape, he stared up at the stout one: Wilcox; at the little one: Meredith. Meredith white and Wilcox

white. But he had thought. . . . Slick's friends, that was why. He never. . . .

He burst into noisy, hysterical laughter. He bent over double and tears oozed from his eyes. Meredith's legs and Wilcox's legs, waiting.

"I thought you was cops," he panted. "This ain't got nothing to do with me. You got the wrong John Natchez."

He held forth his letter, but neither of them took it.

Meredith's eyes narrowed. "Just a minute," he said. "We've come too far to let it go at this. Why did you write Wilcox to look you up if you never wanted to see him?"

"Never mind that, Harry," Wilcox exclaimed.

"You got it wrong, mister," said Natchez. "I never wrote no letter. Don't even know what this say. I was never no good at reading."

"Ah, please," said Meredith. "You don't have to know us if you don't want to. That's your privilege. But don't hand me that stuff."

"Harry!"

"No, let me talk, Lloyd. After God knows how many thousand miles. We went to your rooming house in New Orleans, but you weren't there. You moved. We go to a gin mill where you got the first letter Lloyd sent, and the bartender there takes us for cops, until we show him your letter that you're holding. Then he says you were fired and went back home to Sparta. Why were you fired? You refused to clean some woodwork! So I say to Lloyd, all right, he was handing you a line of crap and he don't play any more. Let's go home. No, we got to come up here, because maybe Lloyd can do something for you."

"Harry, will you cut it out!"

"Shut up, Lloyd. Guy in the lunch wagon over there says you work for the tailor. Tailor tells us to get the hell out of the store and lay off his help. And now you got the guts to tell us you're a different John Natchez!"

Natchez drew himself up. "You finished, mister?"

"Yeah," said Meredith, "I'm finished, and I wish to hell I never started on this wild goose chase."

"O.K., mister. Now you know how it is here in Sparta. The White Folks talk, the colored boy got to listen. But you talking to me man to man, calling me a liar, so that why I'm talking back to you. I never ask no Mr. Wilcox to come after me. I never been down The City in my life.

I don't even know what you talking about. All I know, you and this other gentleman come along and scare all hell out of me, cause in Sparta here when two White Folks come looking after a colored man, most likely they the law. Not that I done nothing to be scared of, but that don't always matter. I don't know what you want me to tell you, but I can't think of nothing further to say."

He again held forth the letter, and this time Wilcox accepted it.

"I feel very badly about this," said Wilcox. "It was all my fault. Please accept my apologies."

Meredith hesitated, and then said, "Sorry. Sorry I shot off my mouth."

Natchez nodded, and watched them get into their car and drive off. After the automobile disappeared, and the dust had settled on the road, he began to trudge homeward.

Don't have to think no more about playing the clarinet now. Come from way up North and wanted to help me out. Just what the man said. Might have bought me store teeth, and a clarinet, but I fooled them good. Or did I?

I fooled them good, or did I. I fooled them good, or did I.

It became a refrain in his mind, and by the time he reached home, the words had lost all meaning. His wife was waiting on the porch, her hands on her hips and her legs astride.

"About time you getting home," she called querulously. "Where you been all this time?"

He stared for a second, and then shouted, "You shut up, you damn, dumb bitch! You hear me? Shut up!" He bounded to the porch and shouted the two words again in her face. She seemed to shrivel into herself before she darted inside the house out of his reach. Some faces appeared at the door of the next shanty.

"What you want?" he snarled, and they disappeared.

He sat down on the top step of the porch, and buried his face in his hands. "When am I going to learn to take it?" he said. "When am I going to learn to take it?"

THE DEFORMED THIEF

By PAUL M. GREGORY

"See'st thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is?"
—Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing.*

FASHION has always elicited much criticism, for its influence touches the whole habitable and habilable globe. Roman philosophers denounced it; Church Fathers thundered against it; social satirists still tilt with the fashion windmill. In fact, the literature of all modern nations disparages fashion, but largely on aesthetic and moral grounds. Some of the literature, both ancient and modern, it is true, censures fashion on economic grounds, but even such criticism has generally been directed against the luxuriousness or costliness of the clothes themselves. Usually overlooked or minimized is the fundamental fact that, by outmoding existing wardrobes, fashion is wasteful by its very nature, regardless of the cost, the beauty, or the usefulness of the new clothes. If fashion turns Woman into an artist, it turns Man into a critic. But this essay criticizes the institution of fashion, not Woman, who is often the slave rather than the mistress of her costume.

The term "fashion" has three distinct meanings. First, it may refer to the apparel currently in vogue; a certain dress is "the fashion." Second, fashion as an institution means the process of annual or seasonal change. Third, in psychological or sociological definitions, fashion refers to the collective behavior of imitation, or the tendency of the masses to follow fashion leaders. We are interested chiefly in the second meaning: fashion as an institution, or as the process of perennial change in costume design. Fashion and style are not synonymous, although most writers confuse the two terms. With reference to clothing, style is any distinctive mode of tailoring, while fashion is the style, or the variant of the style, prevailing at any given time. A style evolves slowly, and reflects the people's way of life; fashion is a chameleon, ever changing, never in vogue long enough to reflect basic tastes and habits. Frequent fashion changes artificially shorten the period during which a style prevails; thus fashion is a parasite

on style. The loose drapery of ancient Greece and Rome, the velvet, gold-trimmed robes of the Renaissance—these are styles, and they call to mind certain periods in history. Togas, hoopskirts, bustles, hourglass figures, form-fitting dresses—all remain distinctive styles; and, like Hattie Carnegie's bustles, they sometimes come back into fashion as revivals or adaptations of old styles with modern touches of detail. Style is concerned with the basic shape or silhouette of clothes. For, as Elizabeth Hawes says in *Fashion Is Spinach,* "style doesn't give a whoop whether your . . . clothes are red or yellow or blue, or whether your bag matches your shoes."

Clothing styles give the social historian some insight into the life of the people who wore them, as Anatole France realized. Two centuries hence historians may infer from the functional design of bathing suits, sports clothes, and women's business suits, that ours was an age in which women won for themselves greater physical and social freedom and economic opportunity than our grandmothers had in the nineteenth century. Such a distinct design constitutes a *style.* But the slight shifting of waistlines or necklines from season to season, the popularity of certain colors, the shortening or lengthening of skirts by two inches, will tell nothing of the life of the people. Such trivia are the heart of *fashion.*

In *Recurring Cycles of Fashion, 1760-1937,* Agnes Brooks Young develops an interesting theory of what she terms fashion changes but which should really be called style changes. She points out that in the past two centuries woman's silhouette, characterized chiefly by the shape of the skirt, has moved through a series of recurring cycles lasting about thirty-five years each; within each cycle the annual fashion changes have consisted of minor variations on the major theme; and finally, there have been only three basic styles, or silhouettes, which have succeeded one another in unchanging order: the bell (characterized by the hoopskirt), the back-fullness (characterized by the bustle), and the tubular (which is relatively form-fitting or, in some cases, straight. These skirt types seem to exhaust all the possibilities. Side-fullness of the pannier type is a variant of the back-fullness and the bell types; extreme front-fullness is not only impractical but also undesirable, as it might suggest maternity.

There seems to be a popular antipathy toward reintroducing remembered styles. Women consider the earlier variants of the current tubular style era (for example, the boyish silhouette of 1925) ridiculous or distasteful. Older women retain disagreeable impressions of the bustled

dresses their mothers wore in the late nineteenth century. Since these two silhouettes are taboo, and there are only three basic types to choose from, a change to a new style cycle must revive some variant of the bell, or hoopskirt, which, absent from the memory of women now living, takes on a quaint, charming, or romantic character. Mrs. Young predicted (in 1937) that, because the tubular cycle had run since the turn of the century, we would soon enter upon another bell cycle.

If this theory of long cycles in silhouette (or style, in the broad sense of the word) is valid, it still remains to explain and evaluate the phenomenon of annual or seasonal changes within each cycle, or fashion as distinct from style. Why do fashions change? The ultimate causes of fashion are the subject of much speculation, some of it fantastic, some of it plausible. Thorstein Veblen emphasized the role of conspicuous consumption and the desire for distinction through dress. Others attribute fashion changes to the desire for decorative dress to enhance sex appeal. "No fashion is ever successful unless it can be used as an instrument of seduction," according to James Laver, costume authority of the Victoria and Albert Museum in England. This may explain decorative dress, but not the incessant *changes.* Nor is dress itself an indication of modesty, for it is our faces which present our ego to the world. "If we really had modesty," says Raymond Mortimer in his *Essay on Clothes,* "it is our faces that we should conceal. By comparison our legs are anonymous, our bellies uneventful."

In explaining *Why Women Wear Clothes,* C. Willett Cunnington develops a fascinating theory of fashion. Women wear clothes chiefly to enhance their sex appeal. Sex appeal is heightened by novelty, and so fashion covers up one part of the body and exposes another part; and the bits selected for concealment or display are constantly changed in order to stimulate man's curiosity. Complete exposure of the whole body is less exciting to man than partial exposure; therefore fashion each season will "feature" one special region, either by exposure or by elaborate concealment of innocuous regions. Once fashion chooses to bare a particular area, women rapidly lose their inhibitions concerning that region; and these taboos are shifted to some other part of the body. "When the naked bosom is freely exposed, the foot may coyly retire into obscurity. Thus does Woman play on Man's feelings a perpetual game of hide-and-seek with bits of her body." The huge crinoline skirt, denying the facts of

anatomy, arouses man's exploring instincts. Provocative petticoats inspired the Victorian gentlemen with uplifting thoughts. Such armaments, he reasons, surely must protect a rich treasure; and the thief is allured by the illusion of the locked casket. Or part of the dress may be flimsy, fenestrated, or transparent, to remind man that "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage."

Other factors leading to sartorial experimentation are, of course, the restless and unending search for perfect beauty, and curiosity. Some people even believe that vanity and curiosity spring from a subconscious modesty; dissatisfied with our appearance, we seek perfection, an ideal which always eludes us. We try whatever promises improvement, and then embark on a fresh experiment. And we seek the irreconcilable goals of submergence in the crowd and the appearance of individuality. In temperate zones, moreover, seasonal changes may accentuate the desire for fashion changes. Finally, there is the social and economic class structure. The rich, the bored, and those lacking in outside interests seek to distinguish themselves from the masses by dress, and succeed in doing so temporarily. The imitativeness of the lower income groups and the desire of the garment industry to capitalize on a novelty lead to imitation and vulgarization of original designs and deprive the "elite" of their distinction. Thus the *haut couture* must constantly evolve new fashions, or revive old styles, in order to continue to supply "exclusive" apparel for its clients.

II

Profits from producing or selling fashion goods may be profits of monopoly, of innovation, or of risk-taking. Producers or sellers who can control or influence the trend of fashion—sometimes through fashion magazines which "predict" what they have already decided to sell—and whose "creations" are not imitated, are largely relieved of risk, and they receive monopoly profits; for their "exclusive" apparel sells at monopoly prices. (Around 1929, for example, cotton house dresses, originally $3.95, were sold for $19.50 after Mary Lewis, then of Best and Company, promoted them as fashionable frocks.) Even with imitations, sellers obtain profits of innovation as long as a new fashion remains exclusive. Eventually the "creations" of Hattie Carnegie, Valentina, and others, are copied by the garment manufacturers on Seventh Avenue, New York; and these profits of innovation disappear. But by that time, still other "creations"

are developed; and the profits of innovation may be permanent so long as the stream of new ideas does not run dry. Finally, those who can neither influence the fashion trend nor be among the first to introduce new designs must anticipate the future demand. The manufacturer or seller who guesses correctly gains profits which are a "reward for risk-taking," while those who guess wrong may take losses on unsold inventory and markdowns, and may also suffer from the wastes which result from hand-to-mouth buying, seasonal production, and small-lot production.

Although some manufacturers and sellers may lose, business in general profits from fashion changes. Large-scale producers take added risks, and some lose; but some gain enormous profits in the steady market for replacement sales of clothing. The loss of some producers results, not from fashion itself, but from an incorrect anticipation of future fashion trends; it is analogous to producers' losses from other economic risks. If manufacturers always lost, they would oppose fashion changes! If fashion gyrations were eliminated, one of the risks of business would be gone and there would be less potential loss, but there would also be less profit from heavy repeat sales of clothing and accessories. And fashion editors, designers, fashion magazines that sell patterns, and the large and growing clan of publicity organizations which make toeless shoes smart this summer and iridescent hosiery next winter—all lose or gain from the fashion merry-go-round. Ultimately, the real losers from fashion are consumers.

Frequent fashion changes are stimulated by producers and sellers in order to make people dissatisfied with their present garments and induce them to buy new ones long before the old ones are worn out. Sales volume is based largely on repeat sales. If a garment is durable and well made and will last five years, a fashion change which makes consumers discard it in one year destroys much of its utility. This puts a strain on the consumer's pocketbook; it reduces our scale of living and encourages a tremendous waste of economic resources. But fashion gyrations may have an even more insidious effect; for if clothes are discarded after one season's wear, the customer may come back to the retailer for "new" fashions before she can discover whether her "old" dress was really durable or well made. This may encourage some unscrupulous manufacturers to adulterate their product. They may produce shoddy goods; cut costs by not allowing enough material for shrinkage or alterations; save a few yards of material per hundred dresses by skimping on yardage, causing seams

to split; use fugitive dyes and composition buttons which melt. Producers may try to beat the price of their rivals, not by more efficient production but by diluting quality and durability; and they may succeed in this practice because the public has been taught to pay attention to fashion but not to inquire too closely about the technical composition of materials. Indeed, part of the garment industry opposed the "Truth in Fabrics" bill because they feared that honest labeling would take women's attention from fashion and make them buy more rationally. "Nothing should be done that would take the woman's attention from fashion and direct it toward the technical composition of materials," said an industry witness before a congressional committee in 1938. When fashion does not lead to adulteration and reduced durability, it fosters premature replacement of apparel in order to stimulate sales volume. Truly, "the fashion wears out more apparel than the man."

Lately there has been a wave of protest against the exaggerated silhouette which the industry is promoting. Some writers have denounced the new fashions. Women have organized short-skirt clubs and "Little Below the Knee Clubs." Some women dislike the expense of acquiring a new wardrobe, and many men prefer short skirts on aesthetic grounds. In Hollywood, women have paraded in bathing suits to prove they need no artificial padding around the hips. And in London, the National Federation of Merchant Tailors has frowned upon the proposed long skirts on economic as well as aesthetic grounds. The effect of such protests has been a slight temporary decline in dress sales, and many retailers have presented full-page advertisements in defense of the new fashions. Copy writers are urged by the industry to describe the current dresses as "new length" or "the new look" instead of "long length." The fullness of the skirt is defended on the ground that it is needed to balance the general effect of longer skirts. And the whole radical change is declared a "natural" reaction of the public against the frozen silhouette under Order L-85. Such apologetics seem to indicate that the industry is determined to have its way.

Although industry leaders loudly deny that the new designs were deliberately chosen in order to outmode existing wardrobes, they have also admitted (sometimes in print) that they intend to get their share of the growing national income, regardless of popular criticism of the new fashions. (And the men's wear industry intends to profit from the cash-

ing of veterans' terminal leave bonds.) Businessmen know that women will eventually accept the new fashion, as they did the Irene Castle hair bob, the hobble skirt, and the tubular monstrosities of the '20's. Eventually women will have to wear the new dresses, or wear "outmoded" styles. Significantly, while manufacturers argue that the sharp change in fashion is needed in order to overcome price resistance, retailers are trying to explain the higher prices by pointing to the radical changes in the clothes. In a postwar period, fashion changes are an inflationary influence.

III

Although a particular fashion may possess great utility, the fashion industries are not essentially concerned with utility or with genuine improvement in clothes. Society has usually scorned utilitarian dress reformers—except Mrs. Bloomer, whose simple invention exalted her to the seats of the mighty. It, therefore, seems appropriate to discuss fashion in the light of utility.

Clothes are semidurable goods which yield "services" of gradually diminishing utility, because of depreciation and obsolescence. (It is possible, of course, to purchase a single service by renting clothes for a single occasion.) As these services decline in utility, the consumer must decide when to discard the garment and replace it. Now, the utility gained by replacing a not-yet-worn-out article is not the total utility of the new article, but the *difference* between the total utility of the new article and the utility (or potential services) remaining in the discarded article. Since the rate of fashion change almost never coincides with the physical life of the goods, fashion induces premature replacement; and this wastes the utility remaining in the discarded garment.

The rate of replacement of clothes is influenced by their price, the consumer's income, and the rate of depreciation and obsolescence. If the garment is priced low, a consumer (with any given income) is warranted in replacing it earlier than if the price is high, for at a low price the utility of the expected added services exceeds the utility anticipated from alternative purchases. The richer the consumer, the less each dollar is worth to him, and the earlier he is likely to discard clothes and replace them. But since a dollar seems large to a poor man, he should (rationally) wear his clothes longer. Finally, wear and tear causes depreciation, while monotony, conspicuous waste and, of course, fashion, all cause obsolescence.

Even in the absence of wear and tear, it is usually claimed that long use of the same styles is monotonous, and their utility will decline because people like change and novelty for its own sake. Also, in a pecuniary culture which stresses conspicuous display of wealth, people may lose prestige if they wear the same style for a long time. Except for fashion, these factors are largely outside the control of any individual or business firm. But since fashion changes are influenced by business, they create deliberate or *purposeful* obsolescence of goods, and induce premature replacement and much waste, even in the absence of wear and tear and such monotony and conspicuous consumption as is normal.

Most people dislike tension; satisfaction consists in the relief from tension. Fashion—and suggestive advertising, with which it is allied—makes people dissatisfied with their existing clothing, arouses desires, and if people lack the purchasing power to indulge their newly created wants, sets up tensions which cumulate. Fashion and advertising are a gigantic burlesque show at which millions gape. Seeing new fashions temptingly and teasingly advertised—clothes they can never hope to own, changes they cannot afford to keep up with—must set up a tremendous store of insatiety in the poor and the modest-income groups, an insatiety which probably contributes to the neurotic personality of our time. And fashion may destroy utility, not only for one but for many. Just as becoming apparel is satisfying to all who behold the wearer, so a fashion change makes last year's apparel distasteful not only to the wearer, but also to her friends, who may be ashamed to be seen with her.

If fashion changes reflected changing tastes and habits, then each season's fashions might be an improvement over the last, and might possess more utility by being a closer approximation to our basic needs. But this would be so only if styles changed gradually and were not forced. If fashions changed in order to attain beauty in dress, the result should be a gradual approach to artistic perfection. But this is not the case. As Veblen pointed out in the *Theory of the Leisure Class,* the alleged beauty of the prevailing fashions is spurious, since none of them will bear the test of time. The Chinese and Japanese, the ancient Greeks and Romans, and the peasants of many European countries have evolved fairly stable styles which many critics consider more artistic and more satisfying than the fluctuating fashions of modern industrial communities. Indeed, in

copying or adapting them, modern designers either admit their intrinsic superiority, or else betray their own poverty of creative imagination.

As John Brophy indicated in his delightful book *The Human Face,* there have been fashion revivals in faces, in eyebrows, in foreheads, in hairdressing and hair color, and in cosmetics, as well as in clothes. In the 1930's for instance, there was a remarkable metamorphosis of brunettes into the ancient Egyptian queen Nefertiti, while many blondes tried to imitate Botticelli's Venus. Most current fashions, in dress and in other spheres, are revivals of bygone styles, and their promoters are highly conscious of history. Today's artificially swollen habiliments—like the exaggerated use of cosmetics—hark back to Elizabethan times. Elaborately decorative rather than functional, many currently fashionable dresses appear to be designed to impress the casual observer rather than those sufficiently intimate to come to close quarters; and this may indicate that women are supposed to please the general community rather than their husbands or lovers.

Fashion destroys utility, however defined. If utility is considered a physical attribute, then the changed fashion forces consumers to discard still useful garments. For people who are concerned with wearing the "right" things, utility based on social approval is immediately destroyed when the old garment loses social caste. But perhaps the true function of apparel is to attract attention to the wearer. A man may criticize a woman he has seen in a ridiculous hat, but without it he might not have seen her at all. It has served its purpose if it provokes notice, if not admiration. But even if utility is based on novelty, only the new clothes have utility; and every change in fashion destroys the attention-arresting features of the displaced garment. Whatever the utility of fashion *goods* may be, we must subtract from it the loss of potential services remaining in prematurely discarded garments, the disutility and "care costs" of frequent shopping and concern over "matching" clothes with accessories, and the heightened irrationality of buying which result from fashion *changes.* Thus fashion as an economic institution creates disutility, regardless of the usefulness of the fashionable clothes themselves. In the absence of annual fashion changes, all people would wear the same styles longer, and more people than today would feel appropriately dressed. Industry ought to provide a wide range of styles at any given time, in order to complement the great variety of ages, physical types, and personalities. But stability of styles is

not the same thing as standardization; variety can exist without changing designs one jot or tittle from season to season.

IV

Despite intense rivalry in the production and sale of clothing, fashion itself is a monopoly element, for it reduces competition in two ways. First, producers differentiate their goods from all rival "creations" at any one time. A distinctive or "exclusive" fashion has the same economic effect as a brand or trademark: it distinguishes a particular product in the minds of buyers and creates loyalty to a particular producer or seller; it lifts the product out of the market for more standardized goods and creates a specialty which is relatively free from comparative judgment of price, quality, or durability. In this sense, fashion is a pure monopoly element, although it results not in monopoly, but in "monopolistic competition"; for there is always the possibility of consumers switching to some other producer's designs. Second, each producer differentiates his own offerings from the model he was selling last season. This differentiation over time, or "temporal differentiation," with its incessant emphasis on newness, makes people dissatisfied with their existing clothing and leads them to buy newer fashions. Their dissatisfaction begot of obsolescence, they do not necessarily forsake their original buying source. In fact, a producer or seller who can offer the "latest" fashions has a selling advantage over his more conservative rivals, once people are induced to think of utility in terms of novelty and get into the habit of frequently replacing their clothes. The garment industry, the millinery, shoe, glove, and other industries which depend on fashion for sales volume recognize the importance of temporal differentiation. They employ "adapters," who are not true creators or designers, but whose function is to evolve dresses, hats, or other articles of apparel that are "new." These fashions must be definitely earmarked for the current season and must have at least one talking point—if only a new name for an old color—easily recognizable as different from last season's fashions.

In the long run free consumer choice is more seriously restricted by fashion than by ordinary brand differentiation, because merchants do not generally carry "unfashionable" goods, even though people may want them. Many women who buy and wear the clothing in vogue rather than the clothing they want explain it by saying: "It's what everybody is wear-

ing. The stores don't even show anything else." Thus fashion limits the genuine variety available to consumers, and at the same time encourages spurious differentiation which impedes rational choice. And by taking women's minds off price, quality of materials and workmanship, fashion encourages wasteful buying. In the case of ordinary brand differentiation, moreover, a consumer will insist on his favorite brand—though better or less expensive ones are available—but he can at least buy several units at a time (for example, a carton of Chesterfield cigarets instead of one pack). But under temporal differentiation the high rate of obsolescence of fashion goods makes people reluctant to buy ahead. If styles were more stable and annual fashion changes nonexistent, a prudent buyer could purchase several identical items at once (at a sale, or out of season), thus saving money and the time and energy of shopping, as well as being able to use one garment while letting the others "rest" or be repaired or renovated. In some markets, for example that of automobiles, the loss from annual model changes is to some extent the gain of the used-car buyer, for heavy trade-in sales swell the stock of used cars and facilitate automobile ownership by lower-income groups. But unfashionable clothes do not so readily find their way to poorer people, either through charity or through secondhand clothing markets. The latter are not so highly organized as the used-car market, and, besides, there is some social stigma attached to wearing secondhand clothes. "These honest mean habiliments" are often discarded, or left to hang unused in closets. Thus fashion in clothing may create greater waste than style changes in automobiles, socially as well as personally.

According to M. D. C. Crawford, in *The Ways of Fashion,* the New York market produced 125,000 models in women's dresses in 1939-40; in dresses above $4.75, wholesale, less than 300 dresses per model; below $4.75, less than 1,000 dresses per model. Some of these models are from earlier seasons; some are "new." Fashion as a brand or trademark (ordinary differentiation) accounts for some of the designs; but fashion as a device to stimulate obsolescence and premature replacement (temporal differentiation) must account for the larger part of this multiplicity of models, for there could be great variety at any given time without so many models if a new set were not "created" every season.

Many writers attribute the excessive number of models to design piracy, and urge the passage of legislation similar to that in France to

prevent and punish the copying of designs. The merit of such a law is debatable. The two American attempts at legal design protection—the NRA garment industry codes and the Fashion Originators Guild of America (FOGA)—were both thrown out by the Supreme Court. Since standardized models have often led to cutthroat competition, producers and sellers rely on constantly shifting fashions in order to have a specialty which is removed from comparative judgment. Legal design protection would encourage further product differentiation and would make the market less competitive; for imitations, copies, and adaptations of "original creations" blur the sharp differences which are the essence of monopoly power in the area of fashion goods.

Nor does the entire fashion industry object to design piracy. Fabric manufacturers know that copying goes on all the time, and they realize that imitations swell the sale of their fabrics to garment factories and large department stores. The Paris *couturiers*—Chanel, Patou, Vionnet, Molyneux, Schiaparelli—are the display windows for the great French fabric manufacturers—Bianchini, Ducharne, Rodier—and are heavily subsidized by them. The manufacturer sells the material not only through the original designer, but also through the other firms which copy the model. In fact, fashion could not exist without imitations of high styles in lower price ranges.

Design piracy, like trademark infringement, would increase competition if the copy were perfect, for it would prevent monopoly profit from an "exclusive" design and would rapidly dilute the profits of innovation. But in the garment industry the copy is seldom perfect; it is usually a vulgarization of the original, often frankly called a "copy" or an "adaptation" and sold to a different income group. The *haut couture* prepares originals for the rich, while the garment industry capitalizes on the imitative tendency of the lower-income groups and emphasizes price appeal as well as (an often superficial) style appeal. This is not the same as attempted trademark duplication, through which a new firm tries to tap the same market in the same price range and to huddle under the umbrella of good will built up by the original firm through sustained advertising.

Where the customer is a poor judge of quality (for example, where rational buying requires technical knowledge or a highly developed aesthetic sense), producers, by sheer propaganda, can sell inferior goods

at high prices. The public is told that each season's fashions are new, different. But they are seldom genuine innovations; if they were, there would be some sense in the public's reliance on the tastes of "fashion leaders." The ignorance of consumers in the area of fashion is fostered by businessmen and copywriters who insist that fashion is a "mystery" which only the elect can understand. Now, there is nothing mysterious or esoteric in designing clothes that are truly attractive, functional, and useful. If businessmen were interested in genuine style and quality, the public would not be so generally bewildered and misled; they would not confuse utility with novelty. Designers and producers rarely create an entirely new style; they simply vary an existing one. They seldom experiment with very low prices; they simply cut prices a little, or not at all, or even raise them, and trust to the forced obsolescence of clothes to stimulate repeat sales in a stable price range. Most sellers are reluctant to compete in price or quality; they prefer to rely on fashion to gain customers.

Fashion is intimately related to waste in production and consumption, to seasonality in production and to excess plant capacity, to the business cycle, to advertising and the maturity of industry; and through all of these, fashion changes impinge directly on consumer welfare. By requiring highly specialized equipment and changes in dies and patterns, fashion obstructs diversified production and reduces the mobility of investment. A sudden fashion change may make valuable equipment such as dress patterns or shoe lasts worthless. Moreover, subsidiary industries are also affected. For example, the trend to soft collars for men (although good in itself) has rendered obsolete much expensive laundry equipment. Even Hollywood is affected; by the time a picture is released, the actresses' clothes may be out of fashion. By requiring hand-to-mouth buying of materials, small-lot production, excessive inventories, markdowns of unfashionable goods, and by causing a host of other production and marketing wastes, fashion keeps prices too high in most cases, and wages and profits too low in many cases. Some of the labor, capital, and business ability now used in the garment and accessories industries could well be diverted to other fields; Americans are, for instance, relatively overclothed and underhoused. The quintessence of fashion is waste.

Frequent fashion changes imply the absence of genuine (or workable) competition. If clothing styles were stable, sellers' rivalry might

take the form of price cuts or improved quality, or both. Producers could charge less for the same clothes or could sell better or more durable clothes for the same price, and all selling rivalry could be reduced to price competition. Most so-called "quality competition" in the realm of fashion is really an attempt to stimulate sales without reducing prices and without improving the product. "New" fashions seldom change the product; they change the mind of the buyer, they make her dissatisfied with her existing clothes, which therefore become prematurely obsolete. Emphasis on shifting fashions is an attempt to remove the product from comparative judgment of price, quality, and durability, and to create a specialty which will not have a host of imitators to share in the profits of monopoly or the profits of innovation. Fashion gyrations are relied on to maintain sales volume by frequent replacements in the same income groups, instead of by price reductions to stimulate sales to lower-income groups. Thus fashion is employed to avoid price competition, and in still other ways it deprives the public of the benefits of a rational market: by playing upon and reinforcing consumer ignorance; by providing the shadow instead of the substance of variety and consumer choice; by taking the buyer's mind off price, materials, workmanship, and durability; by encouraging waste in production and marketing; by preventing the independent development of the public taste; by getting the public in the habit of following self-appointed fashion arbiters instead of relying on their own aesthetic values or those of disinterested artists or designers; and by substituting *ars gratia pecuniae* for *ars gratia artis* or *ars gratia populii.*

V

Unequal distribution of income is one of the causes of fashion gyrations, for, if the poor had greater purchasing power, markets would not approach saturation so soon, and there would be less incentive for forced fashion. But here we are interested in the effects of fashion on people of various income levels. Who suffers most from fashion changes? Some writers maintain that the poor, especially working people, do not lose as much from fashion as the middle classes do, because working clothes are functional and the poor do not need to keep up with the lastest fashions. This may be true of overalls, uniforms, and special attire designed for particular types of work, such as factory employment, farming, or domestic service. But the very spirit of most fashions makes functional design

difficult, for most fashions are designed in relation to women who lead lives of leisure; few of them are conceived in relation to the everyday lives of the masses. Very little advertising space is devoted to showing clothes designed especially for working girls, and the clothes which are available to them are poorly adapted to office work or most other employments.

The great in-between classes of American women, neither rich nor poor, with some money to spend but none to waste, are said to suffer most from fashion. If this is true, it may be because middle-class women attach more importance to social approval through dress than do poor women. Or, if poor women would like to wear the latest fashions, they simply cannot afford to. Thus the poor may not waste as much money as the middle classes through fashion changes; but if their desire is unrequited, they may, as a result of frustration, lose more from fashion psychologically. Some people, it is true, pay no attention to fashion. They may be too poor, or, leading a Bohemian existence, they may wish to husband their time and energy for more important activities of a creative nature, or—like the late Mrs. George Apley—they may cling to a bygone era. But few people would, like George Fox, stitch for themselves one perennial suit of leather. It is impossible to prove what class suffers most, but the following generalizations are probably valid. Except for some kinds of working clothes, which are fairly functional, the poor, who can afford it least, may suffer most from fashion changes, especially since emphasis on novelty is often at the expense of quality and durability; the rich, who can afford to discard unfashionable clothes and can have their clothes made to order, certainly suffer least; while the middle-income groups probably suffer in proportion to their desire to emulate the rich and to distinguish themselves from the masses. This may be one index of their middle-class status. In countless advertisements business teasingly dangles "new" fashions before the eyes of people who lack any kind of serviceable clothes. The poor, like Moses, see the Promised Land, but do not enter.

Men suffer less from fashion than women do. Whereas women of all classes seek or accept novelty and incessant change, men demand sartorial conservatism. (Men's clothes may be less comfortable than women's, but here we are interested in fashion *changes,* not in intrinsic suitability of clothes.) We have had our Bucks, Bloods, Macaronis, Incroyables, and Dandies, but since the nineteenth century most men have imitated the common sparrow rather than the peacock. Since the adoption of long

trousers over a century ago, there has been no fundamental change in men's silhouette. In the twentieth century men's clothes have changed very slowly, and annual changes are so subtle that only an expert can tell a five-year-old suit from a new one. Not that class distinctions and conspicuous consumption have been absent in men's apparel. Two generations ago paper or celluloid collars, the made-up tie, and the dickey or false shirt front were regarded as signs of poverty and vulgarity. But today the only observable difference between the business suit of a millionaire and that of an office boy is in the quality of the materials used, and most men seek correctness rather than sartorial distinction. For men, especially those in responsible positions, there is greater social pressure toward conformity and conservatism than for women. The London Stock Exchange recently banned a member who appeared in a plum-colored suit. Agnes Brooks Young tells the story of a bank official who was asked what he thought would be adequate compensation for wearing his wife's hat to the office some morning. "His first reply was fifty thousand dollars, but after a moment's thought he said it would have to be as much as he could expect to earn the rest of his life, since afterward he could never expect to hold a position of financial responsibility again; and in the end he concluded that no price would be enough for the loss of prestige entailed." Some people believe that men's clothes are more conservative and less variable than women's because men are largely engaged in earning a living and have so little time to indulge in conspicuous consumption that they put the burden on women, who have more leisure. But this theory may be questioned, for working women take at least as much pride in clothes as nonworking women do. In matters of personal appearance, women are probably more analytical than men. It is interesting to note that in men's clothes changes toward greater comfort generally come from the working men and very slowly influence the middle and upper classes; while in the case of women the changes come, more rapidly, from the top of the economic and social heirarchy.

We must also consider the changing age distribution of the American population. From 1930 to 1940 the average age increased two and one-half years, and the trend continues. Will this encourage or discourage the desire for novelty? Are older (wiser?) people less likely to be influenced by fashion and more likely to insist on stability? Certainly, tastes become more settled with age, older persons tend to have a larger percentage of

their income taken up with commitments, the mental effort of choice and the physical effort of shopping become more onerous as one ages, and after years of experiment a woman often finds the styles which are most satisfying to her. Young people may welcome frequent fashion changes which give them a chance to experiment and still be like everybody else. Although much fashion advertising is addressed to the young, some fashions are promoted for middle-aged people who seek a more youthful appearance. Moreover, as one grows older, one gets in the habit of expecting and following changing fashions. And some young people, such as college girls, are temporarily able to ignore fashion changes because they can achieve a feeling of security within their group simply by wearing comfortable sweaters, skirts, and moccasins, or other clothes approved by their peers and, therefore, partaking of the nature of a campus uniform. Their independence of fashion is similar to that of the nun, or member of an order, but it is only a group independence, for it imposes on the individual a uniformity as tyrannical as that of fashion.

VI

There is apparently a connection between fashion and the business cycle, but the relationship is not entirely clear. If fashion changes were introduced with the public's welfare in mind, one might expect elaborate and expensive fashions during prosperity, when the national income and purchasing power are high; and simple, inexpensive fashions during depression, when purchasing power is at a low ebb and women must economize. But that is not the case. The long depression of the 1870's was accompanied by a change from simple to more elaborate dresses. During the prosperous 1920's dresses were fairly simple, and their short skirts and straight lines required little material. Late in 1929 the short skirt was abruptly discarded; and dresses, hats, and shoes became more elaborate. This required more material and, in the face of the general crisis, it brought prosperity to manufacturers of dress trimmings and increased textile sales.

Business always has a vested interest in fashion changes. (When real hoops were worn after 1854, the wire industry profited greatly.) But perhaps in depression there is a special incentive to hasten obsolescence of existing wardrobes and to use more materials and labor, thereby stimulating the clothing and accessories industries. Of course this cannot bring

general prosperity; it simply shifts the burden of depression to other industries, which feel the pinch of reduced spending. The problem is further complicated by the possibility that the public may welcome more elaborate dress for psychological reasons, perhaps as an escape mechanism from the demoralizing realities of a major depression. In the current postwar prosperity, with clothing scarcities and high consumer income, one might suppose that the apparel industries would see little need for radical fashion changes. But it seems that, after several years of war-frozen styles, the industry is anxious to get the public back into the habit of expecting annual fashion changes, and further, that only a radical change can be used as an excuse for greatly increased prices. Besides, the wartime reduction of consumers' wardrobes decreases the possibility of a buyers' strike; the depletion of retailers' inventories prevents markdown losses on former styles; and both of these factors reduce the risk in promoting new fashions. Thus the elaborateness of the current fashions does not conflict with the above hypothesis that business tends to promote elaborate fashions in depression and feels relatively less need for forcing obsolescence and selling much material in prosperity.

Fashion changes more rapidly in a democracy than in a caste society where the masses are restricted in purchasing power and in social position. And fashions change most frequently in time of great social upheaval, such as war or revolution. For instance, in the two years from 1784 to 1786 French fashions in women's hats changed seventeen times; and more styles of headgear were produced in the single decade from 1800 to 1810 than in any fifty years since. The French Revolution inspired many macabre fashions. The Sainte-Amaranthe scarf commemorated victims of the Terror draped in red on the way to the guillotine. In 1792 and 1793 the liberty cap was worn as a political headdress. At the end of the Revolutionary period the *ceinture à la victime* imitated the cords which had bound the condemned, and the *coiffeur à la guillotine* reproduced the victims' short haircut. Miniature guillotines were even worn as earrings. In eighteenth-century England party politics inspired ladies to wear political patches on their faces, to distinguish the Tory dame from the Whig. But in more modern times fashion has eschewed politics, and in modern American dress one cannot tell a Republican from a Democrat. Fashion now apparently avoids grave political, economic, and social problems; instead it derives fleeting inspiration from romantic and eccentric

sources. In *The Soul of Woman,* Gina Lombroso explains that women's clothes acquire stability when social conditions are fast and rigid and it is not possible to pass abruptly from one class to another. "When woman's position is stable her costume becomes almost invariable, as in religious or charitable orders, where her position is not affected by her appearance and where she can assert herself by other means than by her clothes and jewels." But when society is in upheaval, as it was during the French Revolution, her clothes change perpetually. "When woman's position is unstable and there is a possibility for her to pass easily from one class to another, her costumes vary incessantly, as she changes banner and coat of arms."

The influence of war on fashion is two-sided. War, with its insatiable demand for men and materials, creates a condition of universal scarcity and at the same time swells the purchasing power of large groups in society. Moreover, the heavy backlog of deferred demand tends to exceed the supply of clothes in the immediate postwar period. The resulting sellers' market, with no need to stimulate sales volume, ought to minimize the influence of fashion during war and postwar years. In wartime, social pressure and scarcities tend to reduce conspicuous consumption by the wealthy and emulation by the poor and middle classes. Durability, comfort, and simplicity are emphasized, and distinction is sought in direct or indirect social service, or its appearance; in a wartime economy, the pecuniary canons of taste are temporarily weakened.

But in another sense, war strengthens the hand of fashion, which adapts itself to the wartime psychology. Civilian apparel and accessories use the wartime motif; and, except for government restrictions on materials, such as CPA's Order L-85, fashion is stimulated by war. For war brings new ideas, breaks down old customs, and is an ally of rapid change. Minor wars, which are picturesque, quaint, or colorful, influence fashion directly. In England, for example, the Peninsular Campaign of 1808 introduced many Spanish effects. The Blücher bonnet appeared in 1814, the Bolivar hat in 1825, the burnous in 1856. The cuirass bodice and the dolman were borrowed from the army, along with *soutache* and "frog" trimmings. The Crimean War inspired a vogue for Turkish effects such as tassels and Oriental colorings. Fashionable colors included Navarino Smoke in 1828, Bosphorus green in 1854, Magenta in 1859. After the Egyptian campaign of 1882, fashion adopted the colors of the victorious

Household Brigade, and in 1900 the civilian popularity of khaki was inspired in England by the Boer War and in the United States by the Spanish-American War. During and after most minor wars, military and naval designs have been adapted for feminine use, especially in trimmings and millinery; and war heroes have supplied names for fashionable items of dress. But a major war influences fashion indirectly, by producing profound psychological and economic disturbances in the civilian population. Perhaps, as Cunnington suggests, a major war provokes the sexual instinct. Ordinary, prosaic men suddenly become heroic figures, desirable to women, who quicken their efforts to attract them. This may explain the exhibitionism which appears in women's fashions during and after major wars.

Even during a war, postwar style changes are planned and are hinted at in advertisements. Wartime restrictions cause the public to overemphasize novelty and change when these restrictions are finally lifted. In the depths of the austerity movement following Dunkirk the British government, rationing clothes as strictly as food, dared not ration hats. The couponless hat, says John Brophy, was the outstanding and highly successful bribe to maintain feminine morale. Once the custom has been established, each firm considers frequent fashion changes necessary as an advertising device to maintain its market position. And the wartime development of new fabrics of great durability, to be put on the market after the war, increases the reliance on fashion to stimulate replacement sales. Moreover, by getting people in the *habit* of prematurely discarding clothes, fashion intensifies wartime shortages, thereby delaying conversion of plants to war production, and later, by inducing a buying spree, it fans the flames of postwar inflation.

VII

Wholly aside from aesthetic and moral considerations, fashion is an economic absurdity, and there is little to be said in its favor. Nevertheless, we can appreciate the wisdom in Gina Lombroso's belief that the enormous stress which women lay on everything pertaining to clothes and the art of personal adornment is connected with the tendency to crystallize sentiment into an object. Woman symbolizes every important event in her life by a special dress; and a jewel or a beautiful gown means to a woman what an official decoration means to a man.

> The temptation of dress is the last step in the ceremony to which the novice has to submit before entering the cloister. The memory of the gown which she, too, might have worn, was the strongest temptation that assailed St. Catherine before she took her solemn vows—a gown embroidered with gold and stars like those her sisters had worn, which her grandchildren would have gazed at with eyes filled with wonder and admiration. . . .
>
> If woman's clothes cost the family and society a little time, money and activity, they allow woman, independently of lies and calumnies, to triumph and come to the fore outside of man's world and competition. They allow woman to satisfy her desire to be the first in the most varied fields by giving her the illusion that she is first, and at the same time enabling her rival to have the same illusion. Clothes absorb some of woman's activity which might otherwise be diverted to more or less worthwhile ends; they give woman real satisfaction, a satisfaction complete in itself and independent of others, and . . . they constitute a safety valve which saves society from much greater and more dangerous evils than those which they cause.

The aptness of these observations lies in their emphasis on clothes which are really beautiful and distinctive. But fashion is not primarily concerned with beauty; and fashion connotes uniformity, not the individuality so cherished in our society and so artfully suggested by the copy writers. Many people who rigorously follow fashions believe they are following their own inclinations; they are unaware of the primitive tribal compulsion; and this is true of fashions in manners, morals, and literature, as well as clothes.

Is the desire for novelty and change in clothes rooted in human nature, as most writers assume? If so, businessmen can truly claim that they are simply meeting a deep-seated public need. But this explanation assumes too much. There may be a general desire for novelty and change, but it need not express itself in our apparel. Dress is simply an easy way for otherwise undistinguished people to distinguish themselves, or to have the illusion of distinction. We do not seem to tire of living in the same house, listening to the same great music, enjoying social intercourse with the same old friends. In fact, we grow more attached to certain possessions through long use—for example, houses, pipes, and even some articles of clothing. The so-called monotony of wearing the same styles a long time does not really flow from inadequacies in the clothes themselves. The constant desire for novelty in clothes (never to be confused with beauty or variety) flows from boredom and lack of more genuine goals in life than merely impressing people or courting social approval

through externals, such as dress. It may also stem from absence of an integrated personality, from monotony of ideas, and from personal and social frustrations. Fashion changes are thus a symptom of intellectual, emotional, and cultural immaturity. Perhaps, as Carlyle said in *Sartor Resartus,* the beginning of all wisdom is to look fixedly on clothes till they become transparent. The subtle insinuations of the fashion industries lead people to believe that newer fashions in clothes will solve their problems. But they do not, will not, cannot solve our problems. Whence, change is incessant. Canny businessmen know that people seek an easy escape from personal inadequacies or from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. So they build a folklore of fashion, and every milliner hawks his wares as if he were selling Fortunatus' magic wishing hat. They invest goods with subjective qualities which they cannot possess, and prescribe their wares as a panacea, a sedative, an elixir. Failure in the economic arena, love unrequited, confusion in a chaotic world—all these lead people to fashion's balm.

If people were not "infected with the fashions," they would grow accustomed to using their clothes a longer time, and would have more of Carlyle's respect for old clothes as "the ghosts of life." Their desire for change and novelty would express itself in other fields—perhaps in other goods, perhaps in absorbing activities, perhaps even in the world of ideas, which offers an amazing variety to tempt the most jaded tastes. As our culture is now constituted, monotony does appear to lie behind most fashion changes, but this monotony is not natural. Business has a vested interest in promoting new fashions and in thereby intensifying the monotony of existing styles. The public may be ignorant, gullible, and vain; but when we hear fashion-mongers say they must adapt their production and advertising to irrational consumer behavior, we seem to hear Aesop's wolf complaining of the lamb.

THE MARXIST CRITICISM OF LITERATURE[1]

By STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN

THE SOCIOLOGICAL CRITICISM of literature originated, like so much else, with the Greeks. Plato's *Republic* includes an exhaustive application of sociological criteria to literature, in terms of both its genesis and its function. Not only is poetry propaganda, he proclaimed, but the greater the poetic charm, the greater the propaganda danger, and he fittingly banned all but types of art he considered useful or harmless from his ideal state. Aristotle's concept of the social origins and function of art was, like Plato's, based on psychology, but since it was a different psychology, the catharsis of passion versus the stimulation of passion, it resulted in a very different social view. Horace continued Aristotle's functional view, but made it ethical and legal rather than psychological and reduced form to no more than a sugar-coating for functional content, so that it was originally the function of the poet to

> set the bounds of public and private property, and the limits of the sacred and the secular, to prohibit promiscuous concubinage, and found the rite of marriage; to establish the civic order and record the laws: it was in these performances that the honor and renown of the divine bards and poems came into being.

In the Renaissance, the Classical view of the social origin and function of poetry was revived. Lodge, in his "Defence of Poetry" against Gosson's "School of Abuse," quotes approvingly the theory of "Donate the gramar-

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[1]This essay, as it will appear in my forthcoming book *The Armed Vision* (Knopf), is the background section from a chapter built around the work of Christopher Caudwell, the brilliant young English critic killed in his twenties, fighting on the Loyalist side in Spain. The inclusion of his work, which seems to me the most impressive Marxist criticism yet written, would considerably brighten the gloomy picture here sketched out. For readers interested in making the comparison, his most important book, *Illusion and Reality,* has recently been reprinted by Lawrence and Wishart in England.

ian" that tragedy and comedy were invented as ways of praising God for a good harvest or a fruitful year. The Puritans, represented by Gosson, were as eager to establish the social function of poetry, but, like Plato, to establish it as harmful. The Classical view survived as late as Shelley's "Defense of Poetry" in 1824, which not only defines the poet as the "unacknowledged legislator" of mankind, but gives rather dubious anthropological theory for the origin of poetry in savage attempts at social communication.

Modern sociological criticism of literature more or less begins in the eighteenth century with Vico, who explained authors in terms of their historical conditions in *La Scienza Nuova,* and continues in Herder's view of literature as primarily the product of national and temporal conditions. In England at about the same time, relative social criteria began to be applied to literature, particularly to the "barbarous" work of Shakespeare, by critics like Pope and Dr. Johnson, and Warburton and Bishop Hurd came out for a complete historical relativism, the latter arguing that Gothic architecture must be judged by Gothic standards and no other, and analyzing romance literature in terms of feudal society and chivalric life. The great line of sociological criticism, however, developed in France, from Montesquieu, through Madame de Staël's *Literature in Relation to Social Institutions,* to the historical criticism of Michelet and Renan. In Sainte-Beuve it became an important literary criticism, but with personal and biographical elements emphasized more than the social, and in Sainte-Beuve's disciple, H. A. Taine, finally emerged as full-fledged modern sociological criticism.

Taine's *History of English Literature,* published in 1864, is still the best history of English literature we have, an almost miraculous feat for a foreign critic. It studies English literature as the result of changing English society, the product of race, epoch, and environment. At times it is almost a class analysis, with Robin Hood a poetry of the yeoman class, Burke a literary representative of the "natural landed interests," Addison a spokesman for the new bourgeoisie, etc. The literary judgments are sometimes off, particularly in the sort of English author difficult for foreigners to handle, like Skelton and Donne, (the latter "of terrible crudeness"), and Taine doesn't understand Shakespeare very well, vastly underrates Coleridge, and dismisses out of hand the whole English classical tradition. His picture generally, however, is so learned, so sensitive to

poetic nuance, and so full of insights and sharp perceptions (he sees Tudor architecture, for example, as the giving-up of fortresses) that it more than outweighs the deficiencies. Taine's *History of English Literature* remains to this day the great triumph of sociological criticism, and he showed in his *Balzac* that the method is just as valuable used intensively on one writer as it is in literary history, reading the *Human Comedy* as the bourgeois heroic epic with a complete sensitivity both to its social implications and its literary values.

The great continuers of Taine's tradition of socio-aesthetic literary history were Francesco de Sanctis, whose *History of Italian Literature* appeared in 1870, and Georg Brandes, the Danish critic, whose monumental *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature* began appearing in 1872. Both, like Taine, were liberal or radical in sympathy, Romantic, class-conscious, rationalistic, deterministic, and enamored of science; and both had, in addition, Taine's deep sensitivity to literature that enabled them to avoid mechanical pigeonholing and evade the rigid determinism of their own concepts. De Sanctis' book (although difficult for anyone substantially ignorant of Italian literature to judge) is a large-scale picture of Italian literature as an expression of the Italian people, and its insistence on the importance of aesthetic form and the relation between form, rather than content, and social conditions, make it a very important work. Brandes' great book is an intensive coverage of the first half of the nineteenth century in French, German, and English literature. Although Brandes' class analysis is sharper than either Taine's or De Sanctis', and he quotes specific texts a good deal less than Taine, his aesthetic and formal perception is fully as deep as that of either. Like Taine, Brandes carried the method into full-length individual studies, including books on Goethe, Shakespeare, Nietzsche, Voltaire, and a number of others, in each case exhaustively relating the man to his society without losing either him or the work as individual and unique values.

Non-Marxist sociological criticism in America has not been a very substantial movement. Its only major work is Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought,* which drew largely on Taine, Brandes, and the economic determinism of J. Allen Smith, but also made liberal use of Marxist insights (most of them unidentified). Besides Parrington and Van Wyck Brooks and his school, the most important American sociological criticism is probably that of John Macy. Macy's first book, *The*

Spirit of American Literature, published as long ago as 1908, is the application of social criteria, including a good deal of direct propaganda for socialism, to the major figures of American literature, but in terms of economic and social debunking (literature is "the expression of outworn states of society") rather than Marxist analysis. Macy made little or no use of Marxist concepts, and his second book, *The Critical Game,* made it clear that he was a Socialist whose critical mentors were Poe, Tolstoy, and Rémy de Gourmont (the latter "the greatest critic that has been born"). His only other book, *The Story of the World's Literature,* is a tasteless and ignorant hack book in the Van Loon tradition, requiring no discussion.

Randolph Bourne continued the Macy tradition of independent radical criticism, drawing on native sources like Veblen, but his work was much more aware of Marx, and *The History of a Literary Radical* and essays in *Untimely Papers* (particularly a class analysis of morals) make it pretty certain that he would have emerged as a Marxist critic had he lived. His revival of the nineteenth-century theory of the book review as "an independent inquiry," in which the reviewer turns up his own information and develops his own views on the subject, restored one of the most fruitful methods possible for sociological criticism (Marx and Engels had used it), but it faded out again as an idea after Bourne's death for the good reason that it demanded more of the critic than almost any of our contemporary sociological or Marxist critics have.

Another American sociological critic who did not live long enough to fulfill his promise was T. K. Whipple, who died in 1939 in his forties. He had lived long enough, however, to progress from a marked indebtedness to Brooks in his first nonacademic book, *Spokesmen,* in 1928, to a clear-headed and independent Marxism in his second, *Study Out the Land,* published posthumously in 1943. *Spokesmen* dealt with contemporary American writers in terms of the Brooks thesis of the artist truncated by society, but the pieces in *Study Out the Land* are a genuine attempt, not to assign truncations *a priori* to writers, but to study calmly and analytically the complex web of relationship between a work of art and society. (Even when using a wholly pejorative term like Michael Gold's "fascist unconscious," Whipple remakes it as a term of objective social description.) With the conversion of Whipple sometime in the '30's, with Bourne and Parrington dead and Macy retired, the last possibility

of a non-Marxist American sociological criticism disappeared. From then on, American sociological criticism was either Marxist or it was nothing. In the case of Brooks and his school, it was nothing.

Little contemporary literary criticism has attempted to use any formal sociology other than Marxism. L. C. Knights has drawn heavily on Tawney, as well as on Weber, Sombart, and others, in *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson*. The contemporary German critic Levin L. Shücking published *The Sociology of Literary Taste* in 1931, apparently influenced by both Mannheim and Weber, but rather than an actual sociology it is only the barest sketch for a proposed science. Although it asks some of the questions about the determinants of literary popularity, it has none of the answers. *Toward a Critique of the Popular* would be a much more apt title, and what warrant the book has to discussion is in connection with I. A. Richards' critical analysis of reader reaction.

II

The Marxist criticism of literature begins, naturally enough, with Karl Marx, although he himself wrote comparatively little specifically on literature.[2] Its theoretical basis is the relationship of literature to society defined by Marx in the Introduction to the *Critique of Political Economy:*

> In the social production of their means of existence men enter into definite, necessary relations which are independent of their will, productive relationships which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The aggregate of these productive relationships constitutes the economic structure of society, the real basis on which a juridical and political superstructure arises, and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of the material means of existence conditions the whole process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, it is their social existence that determines their consciousness.

Literature, then, like the rest of culture, is a superstructure of social consciousness erected on productive relationships. However, as Marx points

[2]All but a few of the writings of Marx and Engels referred to below, as well as much additional material, are now available, in better and smoother translation, in *Literature and Art*, an anthology of selections from the writings of Marx and Engels, published by International Publishers in 1947. Although it contains many of the important documents, the book is much skimpier than such equivalents as Lifschitz' 800-page job in Russian, and the publishers announce an additional volume in preparation.

out elsewhere, like the rest of culture, through dialectical interaction it then modifies and conditions productive relationships.

Little of Marx's writing directly discusses literature. He quotes Sophocles (in Greek), Balzac, Dante, and *Timon of Athens* in *Capital,* but only their attacks on the evils of money. He discusses "literature" in Section III of *The Communist Manifesto,* but it turns out to be the "literature" of socialist pamphleteering. The Introduction to the *Critique of Political Economy* discusses Greek art, literature, and mythology, but in no real detail. Marx's most detailed critical writing is probably *The Holy Family,* a discussion of speculative aesthetics, including a lengthy analysis of Eugène Sue's *The Mysteries of Paris.* In it, Marx defines the worst feature of bourgeois writing as tendentiousness ("Romanticism is always tendentious poetry," he had written in an article) resulting from an Idealistic attitude toward reality, which transforms living characters into automata designed to prove the author's abstract ideas. In an unfinished manuscript, *Political Economy and Philosophy* (written in 1844, when Marx was just on the verge of Communism, not published until 1932, and not yet translated into English), Marx quotes passages from *Timon* and analyzes them at great length and with remarkable subtlety, but again only as insights into the power of money. Marx wrote a number of lengthy book reviews in collaboration with Engels, including a scorching study of Carlyle ("the whip imagines that it has become full of genius") that shows a real sense of literary craft in its comments on his style. It is hard to say how much of these productions is Marx's, however, and except that the sarcasm is more bitter, they very much resemble Engels' independent reviews. Most of Marx's direct references to literature are asides in books or articles on other subjects, or come in personal letters, mostly to Engels. He sent Engels a copy of Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew,* describing it as a "unique masterpiece" (Freud, incidentally, also thought very highly of it); wrote him about "good old Heine," about his furious dislike of Chateaubriand's work, about a Russian writer named Flerowsky he had discovered; advised him to read "two little masterpieces" by Balzac. One of Marx's most detailed criticisms of literary technique occurs in a letter to Ferdinand Lassalle, commenting on the latter's play *Franz von Sickingen;* and one of Marx's most brilliant literary observations, that the French classical dramatists did not so much misunderstand the Aristotelian unities as understand them "in accordance with their own art needs," also occurs

in a letter to Lassalle. With the addition of a comment to his daughter on Shelley as a truer revolutionary than Byron, a few brief remarks in his work on the subjects of style, beauty, and literary movements in England and Germany, these constitute just about all of Marx's writing directly concerned with literature.

Marx was tremendously well-read (although he and Engels were hardly, as Earl Browder once announced, "the two most cultured men of history"), and his taste was surprisingly good for an active politician. Paul Lafargue, his son-in-law, reports that he considered Aeschylus and Shakespeare "the two greatest dramatic geniuses of all time," that he read Aeschylus every year in the Greek and had studied Shakespeare exhaustively and seen to it that his three daughters knew him by heart, and that he was a great reader of novels.

> He liked above all those of the eighteenth century, and especially Fielding's *Tom Jones*. The modern authors who tempted him most were Paul de Koch, Charles Lever, Alexandre Dumas and Walter Scott. . . . His favorite novelists were Cervantes and Balzac.

Franz Mehring, his biographer, adds: "In his literary judgments he was completely free of all political and social prejudices." He also thought highly of Goethe, Lessing, Homer, and Dante; learned Russian in order to be able to read Russian literature in the original, particularly Pushkin; and learned Spanish in order to be able to read Calderón and other classics. In his youth he had been a Romantic poet (not a very good one), and when he and Engels, who both loved Heine's work, were disturbed by Heine's political foibles, he reminded Engels that we could not demand of poets what we demand of ordinary people.

Nevertheless, in his youth as a disciple of Hegel he had acquired the Hegelian doctrine of the inevitable decadence of art in modern times, as an inferior way of freeing the spirit, better suited to the childhood of mankind. This idea stayed with him, unconsciously transformed into a concept of the inevitable decadence of art under capitalism. "Capitalist production is hostile to certain branches of spiritual production, such as art and poetry," he wrote, and his bitterest fury was reserved for the bourgeois view of art as a commodity. One of the charges against the bourgeoisie in *The Communist Manifesto* is that it has converted poets into "paid wage laborers," and Marx writes in an ironic article: "even the highest forms of spiritual production are recognized and forgiven by the

bourgeoisie" because they represent wealth. As bourgeois civilization progresses, Marx felt, art must inevitably decay, and the artist comes to think of his work as a means, or a trade, rather than a sacred end. Nevertheless, in the classless society, with the disparity between social and artistic development removed and the emphasis taken off specialization, art could again flower naturally as it had in the primitive past. "In a Communist organization of society there are no painters," he and Engels write in *The German Ideology;* "at most there are people who, among other things, also paint."

At the same time, Marx carefully avoided the suggestion of a too-simple correspondence between art and social relations. Along with his statement of the relations between the two in the introduction to the *Critique of Political Economy,* he included a number of important demurrers, writing:

> It is well known that certain periods of highest development of art stand in no direct connection with the general development of society, nor with the material basis and the skeleton structure of its organization. Witness the example of the Greeks as compared with the modern nations or even Shakespeare.

And this art then goes beyond its social relations. Marx adds:

> The difficulty is not in grasping the idea that Greek art and epos are bound up with certain forms of social development. It rather lies in understanding why they still constitute with us a source of aesthetic enjoyment and in certain respects prevail as the standard and model beyond attainment.

It was in this sense of great art transcending both the limitations of its social origins and the artist's views that Marx thought so highly of Balzac, who in terms of the decadence of bourgeois art and his own monarchical-Catholic-reactionary beliefs, should have been destestable to Marx. In *Capital* and in his correspondence, enthusiastic references to Balzac are frequent, and Lafargue reports that "he proposed to write a critical work on *La Comédie Humaine* when he had finished his economic work." His economic work was never finished, and this book on Balzac, which might have been the Marxist aesthetic to prevent, if only by authority, nine-tenths of the idiocy of later Marxists, was never written.

Marx's co-worker, Frederick Engels, not only wrote more specifically on the dangers of oversimple sociological analyses, but devoted the most famous of these warnings, the 1888 letter in English to Margaret Harkness, to the topic of Balzac. He wrote:

> Balzac, whom I consider a far greater master of realism than all the Zolas, past, present or future, gives us in his *Comédie Humaine,* a most wonderfully realistic history of French "society," describing, chronicle-fashion, almost year by year from 1816 to 1848, the ever-increasing pressure of the rising bourgeoisie upon the society of nobles that established itself after 1815 and that set up again, as far as it could *(tant bien que mal),* the standard of the *vieille politique française.* He describes how the last remnants of this, to him, model society gradually succumbed before the intrusion of the vulgar money upstart or was corrupted by him. How the *grande dame,* whose conjugal infidelities were but a mode of asserting herself, in perfect accord with the way she had been disposed of in marriage, gave way to the bourgeois, who acquired her husband for cash or costumes; and around this central picture he groups a complete history of French society from which, even in economic details (for instance, the rearrangement of real and private property after the French revolution) I have learnt more than from all the professional historians, economists and statisticians of the period together. Well, Balzac was politically a legitimist; his great work is a constant elegy on the irreparable decay of good society; his sympathies are with the class that is doomed to extinction. But for all that his satire is never keener, his irony never bitterer, than when he sets in motion the very men and women with whom he sympathizes most deeply—the nobles. And the only men of whom he speaks with undisguised admiration are his bitterest political antagonists, the republican heroes of the Cloitre Saint-Merri, the men who at that time (1830-1836) were indeed the representatives of the popular masses. That Balzac was thus compelled to go against his own class sympathies and political prejudices, that he saw the necessity of the downfall of his favorite nobles and described them as people deserving no better fate; that he saw the real men of the future where, for the time being, they alone were to be found—that I consider one of the greatest triumphs of realism, and one of the greatest features in old Balzac.

As violently as Marx, Engels opposed mechanical tendentiousness in literature. "The more the opinions of a writer remain hidden, the better for the work of art," he wrote in the Harkness letter, and in a letter to Minna Kautsky:

> I am by no means an opponent of tendentious poetry as such. The father of tragedy, Aeschylus, and the father of comedy, Aristophanes, were both very clearly poets with a thesis, as were Dante and Cervantes. . . . But I believe that the thesis must inhere in the situation and action, without being explicitly formulated, and it is not the poet's duty to supply the reader in advance with the future historical solution of the conflict he describes.

Most of Engels' writings on literature are attacks against "vulgar sociology," in defense of aesthetic values.[3] His *Anti-Dühring* includes violent sarcastic abuse of Dühring's project for a "people's school of the future" purified of the humanities. He writes:

> As for the aesthetic side of education, Herr Dühring will have to fashion it all anew. The poetry of the past is worthless. Where all religion is prohibited, it goes without saying that the "mythological or other religious trimmings" characteristic of poets in the past cannot be tolerated in this school. "Poetic mysticism," too, "such as, for example, Goethe practiced so extensively" is to be condemned. Well, Herr Dühring will have to make up his mind to produce for us those poetic masterpieces which "are in accord with the higher claims of an imagination reconciled to reason," and which represent the pure ideal that "denotes the perfection of the world." Let him lose no time about it! The conquest of the world will be achieved by the economic commune only on that day when the latter, reconciled with reason, comes in at double time in Alexandrines.

His commentary on Goethe's ambivalence, his letter to Paul Ernst on Ibsen, his letter to Schlüter explaining that revolutionary poetry and song do not tend to be lasting art because they reflect "the momentary prejudices of the people," are all warnings against the easy politicalizing of literature. The Ibsen letter, chiding Ernst for his oversimple dismissal of Ibsen as a typical petty-bourgeois writer, is particularly interesting. First Engels warns that "the materialist method is converted into its direct opposite if instead of being used as a guiding thread in historical research it is made to serve as a ready-cut pattern on which to tailor historical facts." He then goes on to define the difference between the Norwegian petty bourgeoisie and the German; to point out that, petty bourgeois or not, the Norwegian literary renaissance is important; and to conclude with the statement that whatever the weakness of Ibsen, his dramas reflect a real world of human beings "possessed of character and initiative and the capacity for independent action."

Engels proposed to Miss Harkness the depiction of "typical characters in typical circumstances," but it was characteristic of the skeptical and

[3]Engels illustrated this admirably in his own work on such occasions as his acceptance, in *The Origin of the Family,* of Bachofen's brilliant reading of the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus as a conflict between "mother-right" and "father-right." Engels calls it "this new and undoubtedly correct interpretation" and "one of the best and finest passages in the whole book," despite his fundamental quarrel with it and Bachofen's work in general as philosophic Idealism.

elastic-minded man who had written in the *Theses on Feuerbach* "that which is recognized now as true has also its latent false side which will later manifest itself, just as that which is now regarded as false has also its true side," not to believe that any rigid principle could be imposed on art. His final warning was the letter to J. Bloch in 1890. He wrote:

> According to the materialist conception of history the determining element in history is *ultimately* the production and reproduction in real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. If therefore somebody twists this into the statement that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms it into a meaningless, abstract and absurd phrase. . . . Marx and I are partly to blame for the fact that younger writers sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasize this main principle in opposition to our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights. But when it was a case of presenting a section of history, that is, of a practical application, the thing was different and there no error was possible. Unfortunately, however, it happens only too often that people think they have fully understood a theory and can apply it without more ado from the moment they have mastered its main principles, and those even not always correctly. And I cannot exempt many of the more recent "Marxists" from this reproach, for the most wonderful rubbish has been produced from this quarter too.

After Marx and Engels, the great theoretician of Marxist criticism is the Russian, George V. Plekhanov. A typical and very influential work is the essay *Art and Society,* written at the end of the last century, in which he attacks the shifting relationship between art and society from the viewpoint of historical relativism. He shows with abundant evidence that art is always conceived of as utilitarian when "a mutual bond of sympathy exists between a considerable section of society and those more or less actively interested in artistic creation." The doctrine of art-for-art's sake, on the other hand, with its consequent obscure and esoteric forms, arises "when a hopeless contradiction exists between the artists and their social environment." The most important feature of this historical relativism, and Plekhanov's major contribution to Marxist criticism, is the basic recognition that artists reflect their class and time, not another class and time Marxists would like them to reflect. He writes:

> I do not say that contemporary artists *must* seek inspiration in the emancipatory movement of the proletariat. Not at all. Just as apple trees must give forth apples and pear trees pears, so must artists who share the bourgeois point

> of view struggle against this movement. The art of a decadent epoch *must* be decadent. This is inevitable and it would be futile to become indignant about it.

Plekhanov wrote a number of other works on literature and art, including *French Drama and Painting of the Eighteenth Century, Historical Materialism and the Arts,* his brilliant long essay "Ibsen, Petty Bourgeois Revolutionist" in *Die Neue Zeit* (which perfectly illustrates his relativist theories in *Art and Society*) and others. In addition, a number of his political writings deal extensively with the arts, particularly *The Role of the Individual in History.* In all of them, the depth of his historical and aesthetic knowledge, the relativism of his point of view, the unblinking honesty of his observation, and the power and flexibility of his mind, gave Marxist criticism the soundest documentation and extension it had yet had. He was the first Marxist critic to study the relationship between social relations and artistic *form,* as in his discussion of Ibsen's abstract and symbolist forms in relation to the class basis of Scandinavian society. Plekhanov drew enthusiastically on the best of non-Marxist sociological criticism, Taine and Brandes, just as he anticipated the best of later Marxist criticism, particularly Caudwell, in his use of the most advanced scientific knowledge (in his day, chiefly anthropology), in his undogmatic relativism, in his insistence on the importance of the artist's *sense* of social function at any given time, and particularly in his vast love and respect for literature and art.

The other Marxist theoreticians, outside of Soviet Russia, have added little to Plekhanov in the application of Marxism to literature. Franz Mehring, Marx's biographer, has been called "the originator of historical materialist criticism" and of Marxist aesthetics, but the only critical works of his with which I am familiar, *The Lessing Legend,* 1892, an article on Ibsen written in 1900, and "A Note on Taste," 1898, which appeared in *Dialectics* 4, abstracted from a review of an obscure book, seem much more interested in literature as a reflection of political history than in political history as a clue to literature. One of the most important of Mehring's ideas, and one which he shared with Plekhanov, is the concept in "A Note on Taste," that there is an objective basis of taste, and that it lies in historical relativism. Rosa Luxemburg, another great German Marxist who was deeply sensitive to aesthetic values ("In a novel I don't look for the point of view, but primarily for its value as art") wrote a good deal in her letters and articles about literature (including a wonder-

ful criticism of the style of Marx's *Capital,* "overloaded with rococo ornaments") but as far as I know contributed little of a theoretical nature. Of the Hungarian Georg Lukacs, whom Slochower has called "possibly the keenest and most learned Marxist critic since Franz Mehring," I am familiar with too little work to be able to venture an opinion.

III

"The philosophers have only interpreted the world," Marx wrote in *Theses on Feuerbach;* "our business is to change it." This turned out to be not quite so sound a principle when applied to literature by contemporary Marxist critics (only a few of whom, for lack of space, can be touched on here). In America it led chiefly to the straight political distortion represented by men like V. F. Calverton, Granville Hicks, and Michael Gold. Calverton, the first and worst of the local Marxist literary historians, published in 1932 *The Liberation of American Literature,* which tears through our literature slaughtering Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, and Hawthorne, to announce that Whitman was our first poet and Twain our first important prose writer, and the only important contemporary writers are the "exponents of the proletarian outlook": John Dos Passos, Michael Gold, and Charles Yale Harrison. Granville Hicks's *The Great Tradition,* published a year later, is the same sort of thing, mechanical class-anglings based on the political criteria of the 1930's rather than on those of his subjects' own time, culminating in the same paean to writers like Dos Passos and Gold. If better informed and less nervy than Calverton's book, it is more given to cheap cracks like calling Faulkner "the Sax Rohmer of the sophisticated." Hicks's second book, *Figures of Transition,* a study of British literature at the end of the last century, is more modest and sensible but even less concerned with aesthetic values, and generally no improvement. Michael Gold has never written a book on literature, but the collections of his *Daily Worker* pieces, *Change the World* and *The Hollow Men,* make it clear that not only is he the most ignorant and provincial of all the Marxist critics, a heroic warrior against Gilbert and Sullivan, but probably the least adequate Marxist. He is rather a sentimental and idealistic bourgeois radical of an earlier century, and the picture of Marx's reaction to his passionate love for Rousseau, "the father of Democracy," or Eugène Sue's "epic melodrama to strengthen the heart and hand of the revolutionary workers" (which

Marx put across the barrel in *The Holy Family* as cheap bourgeois romanticism) is interesting to contemplate. Other contemporary American Marxist log-rollers and strait-jacketers of literature include Joshua Kunitz and Joseph Freeman, prominent in the '30's, and Samuel Sillen and Samuel Putnam, prominent in the '40's.

A much more important group of American critics, either Marxist or much influenced by Marxism, have combined sociological criteria with an appreciation of aesthetic values. The most distinguished work produced by this group, and probably the best book yet written about American literature, is F. O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance.* Matthiessen deals with the work of only five writers, Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Hawthorne, and Whitman, over a period of only five years, from 1850 to 1855. Nevertheless, his book is on so monumental a scale, with so much concern both for ideas in a social context (drawing on Marxist insights) and for detailed formal analysis (drawing on his own great literary learning, sensitivity, and fine taste) as to represent perfectly the amplification of Parrington he visualized. (It is amusing that Matthiessen, an admirer of the dialectic, should come to the method as a synthesis of his thesis—a sociological, Brooksian study of Sarah Orne Jewett—and his antithesis—a relatively pure aesthetic study of T. S. Eliot. Matthiessen's subsequent book, a study of Henry James' last period tending to slight social criteria, would presumably be the new antithesis his new thesis provokes). Newton Arvin's *Whitman* represents a similar combination of Marxist insights and aesthetic awareness, on a smaller scale, but almost as successful. Conceived frankly as a job of "scanning the . . . past for whatever resources there may be in it on which a socialist culture may draw," Arvin's book studies the political, social, and economic ideas in Whitman's poetry with honesty, literary awareness, and keen sensibility.

Other critics who have at one time or another attempted to combine Marxist insights and concern with literary form include: Harry Slochower in *Three Ways of Modern Man, Thomas Mann's Joseph Story,* and *No Voice Is Wholly Lost . . .*; Edwin Berry Burgum in *The Novel and the World's Dilemma;* Bernard Smith in *Forces in American Criticism;* David Daiches in *New Literary Values, The Novel and the Modern World,* and *Poetry and the Modern World;* Malcolm Cowley in a number of uncollected articles and reviews and a forthcoming book on American literature; Isidor Schneider in a number of uncollected articles and

reviews. A very few examples of Marxist or near-Marxist criticism of this sort by other writers can be found in *Science and Society* and *New Masses.*

Except under Communist auspices or influence, not much Marxist literary criticism has been written in America. *Partisan Review,* the chief literary organ of the anti-Stalin left, has printed almost no Marxist or sociological criticism of literature since its first years, although it has printed a good deal of criticism otherwise useful, as well as a good deal of faddism, hobby-horse riding, and simple spite. Meyer Schapiro and Harold Rosenberg have perhaps come closest to traditional Marxist historical criticism, although always on the verge of veering off into philosophy; William Troy has made brilliant use of Marxist insights within a larger integration; William Phillips and Philip Rahv, the principal editors, still retain occasional traces of Marxist analysis, although in recent years their critical work has become largely a kind of ethical nail-biting; and a number of the younger men, among them Delmore Schwartz, Randall Jarrell, and Robert Gorham Davis, have written excellent criticism in the magazine making some use of political criteria (in Davis' case, effectively combined with psychoanalytic). The only *Partisan Review* critic who has so far published a Marxist aesthetic is James T. Farrell, in *A Note on Literary Criticism* in 1936. It begins with the apology that Farrell is an amateur critic and amateur Marxist, and then goes on to demonstrate it at some length, with Farrell demolishing the oversimplifications of critics like Hicks and Gold, to set up his own oversimplifications in their place. His volumes of collected pieces, *The League of Frightened Philistines* (1945) and *Literature and Morality* (1947), make it clear, in pieces like the study of Dreiser, that his deficiencies include an absolute want of ear (explaining his own execrable style) and a sentimentalism and naiveté vast enough to insulate him from most literature almost completely.

IV

The picture of British Marxist criticism, with the exception of Caudwell, is about as bad as that of America. None of the straight political critics is as egregious as Calverton or Gold, and they are all much better read, but, on the other hand, none of the men combining Marxist insights with aesthetic concern have produced books of the calibre of *American Renaissance.* Of the first group, typical examples are John Strachey, Ralph Fox, and T. A. Jackson. Strachey, the first of them, in the "Decay of Capi-

talist Culture" section of *The Coming Struggle for Power* in 1933, showed instead only the decay of Marxist sensibility, misreading *The Waste Land,* reducing Proust to simple snobbery, and fantastically overestimating Huxley and his "tragic view of life"; and in *Literature and Dialectical Materialism* in 1934, he projected his own sins of distortion and oversimplification onto Granville Hicks as a scapegoat and killed them off (as Hicks was later to do in his turn, with Parrington). Fox, in *The Novel and the People* in 1937, bent the history of English fiction to the slogan of "socialist realism," and as DeVoto does, from another point of view, assigned "epic" and "heroic" subjects for novelists. Like Caudwell, Fox was killed fighting for the Loyalists in Spain in 1937, and *A Writer in Arms,* an anthology of his work published posthumously in 1937, containing tributes, fragments of his books *Genghis Khan, Communism, Lenin,* and *Storming Heaven,* as well as letters and periodical pieces, shows an aesthetic sensibility capable of breaking through the fetters of his straight political criticism, had he lived. Jackson's study of Charles Dickens, subtitled "The Progress of a Radical," is probably the worst of the lot, a ridiculous, ignorant, and sectarian book, mechanically presenting Dickens' development and mood in exact sequence with the development of Chartism, and noting each occasion on which Dickens shows the proletariat in an admirable light or comes close to recognizing the class struggle. Other British critics whose Marxism results in straight political distortion include F. D. Klingender, an authority on English caricature, whose pamphlet *Marxism and Modern Art* in 1944 carried on the worst traditions of Marxist absolutism, ignorance, and parochialism of the '30's; Edward Upward (temporarily) who achieved what is probably the most stupid single piece of Marxist criticism ever written, an argument that the way to become a good writer is to become a good Marxist, in his essay "Sketch for a Marxist Interpretation of Literature" in C. Day Lewis' symposium, *The Mind in Chains;* and Douglas Gorman, a literary hatchet-man equivalent to Samuel Sillen in this country.

Typical of the British critics who have used Marxism, not as a distorting-glass, but as a sociology with which to understand and appreciate literature more deeply, are Alick West, George Thomson, and Philip Henderson. West is far and away the best, similar to Caudwell in everything but scope, and his small book *Crisis and Criticism,* published in 1937, includes probably the most sensitive detailed reading of texts in

Marxist criticism. The book surveys contemporary literary criticism from a dynamic and relativistic Marxist viewpoint similar to that of Caudwell, and with a comparable literacy, general soundness, and informed indebtedness to areas of knowledge like aesthetics and linguistics. The book exposes the critical limitations of men like Eliot, Richards, and Read with neatness and dispatch, and concludes, like Caudwell, affirming the relationship of literature to production as its essential formal determinant. To illustrate his prescription for criticism, West makes brilliant incidental readings of *The Waste Land,* a Shakespeare sonnet, and *Paradise Lost,* and concludes with an appendix constituting the toughest test of his method possible, a long and absolutely first-rate analysis of Joyce's *Ulysses.* Thomsen, a professor of Greek at the University of Birmingham, admits his direct indebtedness to Caudwell in his chief work, *Aeschylus and Athens,* a study of the social origins of Greek drama utilizing a combination of Marxism and the Cambridge anthropological approach, and avoiding oversimplification from both directions. (His forthcoming book on early Greek society is to deal comparably with Greek epic.) His pamphlet *Marxism and Poetry,* a study in the origin and evolution of poetry, amounts to a popularization of Caudwell, with the addition of Thomson's knowledge of Greek and primitive Irish literatures. Thomson tends to go wrong when he veers from Caudwell, leaving the basic soundness of his theory of the origin of poetry in the collective ritual of primitive food production to fall for Professor Chadwick's elaborate euhemerism and see Homer as the improvisation of the Homeric bards, or finding Elizabethan drama an expression of the rising bourgeoisie, but his work generally is informed, brilliant, and invaluable. Henderson, although extremely literate, as his edition of Skelton and scholarly introductions for Everyman's Library demonstrate, is frequently disappointing, and his books, *Literature and a Changing Civilization, Poetry and Society,* and *The Novel Today,* tend to be somewhat mixed, capable of sensitive analysis and appreciation alongside blind dogmatism like the statement that *since* William Morris was a real Marxian socialist, he was able to write "the only really successful epic of the nineteenth century."

British critics more or less combining Marxist insights with aesthetic awareness include: Jack Lindsay, in *John Bunyan: Maker of Myths* and *The Anatomy of Spirit* (in his case, along with Freudian insights); A. L. Morton in *Language of Men;* Randall Swingler in a number of uncol-

lected periodical pieces; and several members of the *Scrutiny* group, particularly L. C. Knights, in *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* and *Explorations.* Two classics professors, Benjamin Farrington (in *The Civilization of Greece and Rome, Science and Politics in the Ancient World,* and *Greek Science*) and C. M. Bowra, (in *Sophoclean Tragedy, Tradition and Design in Homer,* and *Greek Lyric Poetry*) have, like Thomson, applied Marxist concepts (Bowra somewhat tentatively) in their scholarly fields. Other British Marxist criticism of value can occasionally be found in *The Modern Quarterly,* both the old and the new series, *The Left Review* (which came to an end in 1938) and *Our Time.*

A special category of English critics affected by Marxism is the group of poets that first came to notice in *New Signatures* in 1932, including W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Cecil Day Lewis, John Lehmann, and (a later affiliation) Louis MacNeice. Day Lewis, in *A Hope for Poetry* in 1934 and *The Revolution in Writing* in 1936, combined manifesto-writing, ancestor-chasing, and praise for himself and his friends with incidental sociological literary criticism, some of it quite shrewd. Spender turned out some first-rate Marxist-aesthetic criticism in *The Destructive Element* in 1935, particularly his capture of Henry James for the Left, and has been working very hard since to unwrite it. MacNeice wrote *Modern Poetry* in 1938, largely an account of the genesis of his own taste, with stabs at social analysis, and a tepid study of Yeats' poetry in 1941 (both praised Caudwell but remained unpolluted by his ideas). Lehmann's work of criticism, a pamphlet on *New Writing in England,* is literary journalism of a high order. Auden, the most important poet of the group, has done the least criticism, chiefly fugitive pieces and reviews of a theological nature (he once attacked Joyce Kilmer's "Trees" as heretical), untouched by Marxism and social criteria even when he called himself a radical. (Auden's real criticism appears in his poetry, in works like "The Sea and the Mirror: a Commentary on Shakespeare's *The Tempest,*" and it is very good.)

V

Some account of Soviet Marxist literary criticism is essential, although any estimate on the basis of what little of it has been translated into English is bound to be both fragmentary and misleading. To understand it, in addition to its background of Marxist theory, the reader must know

something of the work of a group, almost unknown to the English-reading public, that has influenced it tremendously, the nineteenth century pre-Marxist Russian "enlighteners": Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov, and Pisarev. Vissarion G. Belinsky, whom Mirsky calls "the father of the Russian intelligentsia," in the 1830's and '40's propagated the concept of literature as a weapon in the social struggle, tracing democratic ideas in contemporary writers like Pushkin and Lermontov, and bitterly attacking reactionary ones in writers like Gogol and Dostoyevsky. Alexander Herzen, an idealistic socialist who spent most of his life in exile, was chiefly influential in the decade following Belinsky's death, calling in his works, particularly *From the Other Shore,* for realistic revolutionary thinking and writing. Nicholas Chernyshevsky, who inherited their influence, published his doctoral thesis, *The Aesthetic Relations of Art to Reality* (reprinted in *International Literature* in 1935 as *Life and Aesthetics*) in 1853, defining art as the reproduction and interpretation of life and its function as the diffusion of knowledge. In *Studies in the Age of Gogol* in 1856, he applied his aesthetic to the valuation of literature in terms of social utility. His disciple, Nicholas Dobrolyubov, in a tremendously precocious literary career that ended with his death at 24, extended the method further and did a very influential series of articles on literary works, using them only as texts for criticism of Russian life (Goncharov's *Oblomov* became "What is Oblomovism?" Turgenev's *On the Eve* became "When Will Real Day Dawn?"). He flatly ignored the literary aspects of the works he was discussing, making his only aesthetic criterion the quality of "being true to life." Dmitri Pisarev, an even more polemic radical journalist who also died in his twenties, pushed the method even further, rejected out of hand all art except that immediately useful for educational purposes, "uncrowning" writers like Pushkin, until ultimately, in the moderate words of Plekhanov, "he carried this concept to the point of caricature." (It should be obvious that the inheritor of this line of progressive hardening of the aesthetic arteries is Tolstoy, who from a different standard, religious morality, continued in his own criticism the narrow social functionalism and aesthetic unconcern of the "enlighteners.")

All these tendencies: the Marxist view of literature, the Russian critical tradition of social utilitarianism in art, even some of Tolstoy's moralism, came to a focus in Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, along with the character-

istics of his own mind and the necessities of his life as a revolutionary leader and head of the new socialist state. Lenin's approach to art is vitally important, since so much of later Marxist criticism depends on it, and it is an incredibly complex approach in which at least six separate emphases (at different times and under different circumstances) can be distinguished. One is the attitude of simple functionalism that he takes in his 1905 article, "Party Organization and Party Literature"; that art is a weapon in the class struggle and must be recruited to help make a revolution. Lenin believed in an absolute objective truth, as his *Notes on Dialectics* and *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* make clear, and he believed that he and his party had it, so that a writer could only find truth and freedom within or alongside of the party. Another attitude is the analytic Marxist view that art reflects social reality but in many respects transcends both it and the creator's views, shown in the six tributes to Leo Tolstoy (five of them available in English in *Dialectics* 6, 1938), that Lenin wrote in the years around Tolstoy's death, trying to reconcile the contradiction between Tolstoy's genius and his reactionary views. A third is a Puritanic resistance to the "sinfulness" of art, related to that of the "enlighteners" and Tolstoy and very like St. Augustine's attraction-repulsion to Virgil. It is best shown in a statement Lenin made to Gorky, explaining why he loved the "miracle" of great music but couldn't listen to it very often:

> It acts on my nerves, makes me want to talk amiable stupidities and stroke the heads of these beings who, living in a filthy hell, can create such beauty. But today you can't stroke anybody on the head—they'll bite off your hand. You've got to pound them on the head, and pound them ruthlessly.

A fourth is the tired businessman's philistine conception of art as a soothing relaxation, shown in his generally academic taste (he wept at Bernhardt's Camille, liked Jack London and Upton Sinclair, saved the Great Theatre after the Revolution because "a theatre is necessary . . . to rest hard workers after their daily work," proposed that the Soviet state arrange mass distribution of reproductions of painters like Rubens and Murillo) combined with his strong dislike for the modern (he experienced "no joy" from modernist painting, wanted to know, like any philistine, whether the artist wasn't concealing his inability to draw, admitted that he couldn't understand Mayakovsky and always fell asleep after three lines of his poetry). A fifth is the social utilitarian view that art is a form of wealth, to be made accessible to the masses under socialism like any

other form of wealth, typified by his statements to Clara Zetkin that art must belong to the people and be comprehensible to them ("Must one offer cake to an infinitesimal minority at a time when the masses of workers and peasants are crying out for bread?"). A sixth is a number of reservations and hesitancies about the other five, compounded of his own rich personality, personal respect for the creative artist, devotion to tolerance and personal freedom, and sense of humor (typified by his marginal comment on someone's memo, "The creation of a new fundamental *class* culture is the fundamental goal of the Proletcult": "Ha, ha!" and "Bunk.") All six of these attitudes, despite their contradictions, were to be major features of Soviet criticism, marked by Lenin's strong personality, and were to be adopted as part of the inheritance by Marxist critics elsewhere.

Compared with Lenin's views, the criticism of other early Soviet leaders and literary thinkers is a fairly simple matter, merely picking up one or another strand of his thought. Leon Trotsky, in his collection of essays published in 1923 as *Literature and Revolution,* reveals a genuine sensitivity to aesthetic values, but is, nevertheless, chiefly concerned with criticizing Soviet writers in terms of the political needs of the Soviet state. As late as 1935, in the *Atlantic Monthly,* he was using an article ostensibly about Céline for a lengthy discussion of French governmental politics. Joseph Stalin, as far as I know, has never written on art and literature. He has been responsible for a number of slogans: that culture must be "proletarian in content and national in form," that "the writer is the engineer of the human soul," etc., and he is supposed to have named "socialist realism." His taste seems to be about as academic as Lenin's, with a particular interest in music; if newspaper reports can be trusted, he likes classical ballet and Russian opera of the Glinka-Borodin sort, he walked out on Shostakovitch's *Lady Macbeth of Mzensk* with the comment that the music was difficult and unmelodic and that he didn't care for the story, and he directed Soviet composers to produce tunes that people can whistle on their way to work. In one respect at least Stalin has bettered Lenin: he seems to have a very high estimate of Mayakovsky, describing him as "the outstanding poet of the Soviet era" and writing in *Pravda* in 1935: "Indifference to the memory and works of Mayakovsky is a crime." Maxim Gorky, a major influence on Soviet criticism, reveals a tremendous critical sensitivity in brilliant snatches of his *Reminiscences*

of Tolstoy, Chekhov, and others, but his formal criticism and literary pamphleteering, published in English in *On Guard for the Soviet Union* in 1933 and *Culture and the People* in 1939, is greatly disappointing; wholly political and unimaginative. Other Soviet criticism by the older generation ranges from the militant leftism of Karl Radek, announcing that Joyce's work is "a heap of dung," to the moderation and good sense of Anatol Lunarcharsky, cutting the Gordian knot of a Soviet controversy over whether Shakespeare was a spokesman for the feudal or the bourgeois class by announcing that he wasn't a spokesman for any class, but a great and conflict-ridden artist living in a great and conflict-ridden time.

For many years, Soviet criticism was largely devoted to battles between Lefts and Rights, Futurists and Formalists, Constructivists and Proletcultists, On-Guardists and At-Your-Postites, Social-Commanders and Anti-Social Commanders, a man announcing that *Eugene Onegin* would have been written without Pushkin and another man countering that anyway no literary works could compare with revolutionary manifestoes, so that it was a rare literary critic who got a piece of criticism written. Within the past decade, however, Soviet criticism seems to have improved somewhat, and the recent controversies by the younger critics have at least been on issues of serious concern to Marxist criticism, definitely transcending Soviet literary politics. The chief of these was the campaign against "vulgar sociology" in 1936 and 1937 which soon turned into a much more fundamental controversy over relative vs. absolute standards in Marxist criticism. It warrants some space.

The critics of "vulgar sociology" defended absolute criteria, under the aegis of Lenin, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov; proposing the evaluation of works of art in terms of timeless political values: i.e. were they "for" or "against" the "people"? The group was more or less led by Mikhail Lifschitz of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, the compiler of Marx's writings on art and author of a summary, *The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx,* which, although generally useful, distorts Marx to make him an absolutist and enemy of "vulgar sociology" (neglecting even to mention, say, his views on Balzac). His camp included V. Grib, the author of an equally simplified study "capturing" Balzac; Mark Rosenthal, editor of the monthly *Literary Critic* and sponsor of the deathless syllogism that since great artists were anticapitalist at any time, and Timon's speeches against gold show that Shakespeare was anticapitalist,

therefore Shakespeare is a great artist; and I. Satz and V. Kemenov, of similar views.

The "vulgar sociologists" defended relative criteria, under the aegis of Taine, Belinsky, Plekhanov, and Mehring; that is, the evaluation of works of art in terms of the writer's relation to the social forces and issues of his own day. They were more or less led by Professor I. Nusinov of the Institute of Red Professors, compiler of a Soviet edition of Hugo and comparable works, a sound man insisting in his articles on Plekhanov's point that in a decadent period the greatest writers (Proust and Joyce are his examples) are bound to be decadent; that wicked and antisocial ideas can produce great art; that truth is relative and subjective; that "the writer is no photographic camera, a work of art is no snapshot, and literature is no mirror." Despite Nusinov's ideas, his team included some fairly poor critics slanted toward "rejection": D. S. Mirsky, a Czarist prince who had gone back to Russia in the early '30's an enthusiastic Communist, and ran to such critical excesses as finding Joyce's exactitude of description a "class style" showing "an aesthetico-proprietary desire for 'things' " (just as an equally mechanical Freudian would find it "anal"); A. A. Smirnov, whose book on Shakespeare is the low point of Soviet criticism, analyzing *The Tempest* as a treatise on the colonial question, etc.; and Professor M. Kravchenko, whose studies of Gogol are similar, if not quite so extreme.

What muddled the controversy almost unbelievably was, first, that neither side would fly its proper banners; both sides claimed Lenin (and had proper Lenin quotes), disclaimed Plekhanov and Taine, charged each other with the influence of Trotsky, etc. In addition, a political issue was involved, in that the "vulgar sociologists" were "leftist," "sectarian," in a Popular Front period when the aims were "moving-in-on," "broadening." It seems obvious that the "vulgar sociologists" were actually attempting to be Marxists, and their opponents only utilitarian politicians, capturing writers like Shakespeare and Pushkin for the working class. Nevertheless, the use the "vulgar sociologists" made of their social analyses (which were not terribly accurate as a rule) was generally to reject great writers indiscriminately, while their opponents had a framework, of no matter what validity, for accepting them. The solution here seems to be the approach of Feodor Levin, who took a median position between the two camps in the controversy. He slapped down the absolutists for renouncing Marxist analysis in terms of social classes and historical development,

simplifying the past to the point where they could not conceive of a ruling class ever standing for anything but parasitism and exploitation, and "catapulting" present politics into the past. At the same time, he slapped down the relativists for their actual vulgarizations and rejections. Quoting Marx on why we still enjoy Greek art and Engels on Balzac (to flavor the ubiquitous Lenin quotations of the controversy) he concluded that both camps were actually vulgar sociologists, and that a serious Marxist criticism would want to know what social reality a great work of literature arose from *and* why it was great. From Levin's articles, it is possible to get a clear view of the controversy, to see both sides picking up aspects of Lenin's thought and using them in a vacuum, to see each side performing half the process of sociological criticism and coming out with absurd results. The hope would seem to lie in a Marxist criticism using the historically relativist standards of critics like Nusinov, applied with the discrimination and appreciation shown for artists by critics like Lifschitz. That is, Marxist analysis *without* consequent rejection; seeing greatness as best expressing class, rather than contradicting it. Such a criticism would also, of course, stop using names, slogans, and Lenin quotations as arguments, discard its pieties, and start looking at literature.

A few examples of Soviet criticism of this sort give cause for hope. One is an essay called "Bacon in Shakespearian Surroundings," by Lunacharsky, part of an unfinished book on Bacon, (published posthumously in *International Literature,* 1936, No. 1). It is a brilliant and imaginative study, very much in the tradition of modern criticism, defining two Shakespearian progressions, the "melancholy," Jaques to Hamlet to Prospero, and the "cynical," Richard III to Edmund to Iago, and then interpreting Bacon's mind and character against the pattern of those two movements. A piece even more impressive is J. Kashkeen's "Ernest Hemingway" (*International Literature,* 1935, No. 5). It is a really remarkable study of Hemingway's work, perhaps the best written to date, revealing a thorough knowledge and understanding of American literature (Kashkeen deals with the influence of writers from Thoreau to Gertrude Stein on Hemingway); a brilliant comparative method (he discusses Hemingway in terms of Dostoyevsky, Flaubert, Céline, Eliot, and innumerable others); great sensitivity to style; and a genuine understanding of the nature of Hemingway's power and depth as well as of his limitations.

In the decade since the "vulgar sociology" controversy, almost no Soviet criticism has been published in English. A volume of anniversary tributes to Pushkin published in English in Moscow in 1939, principally the work of Soviet professors, is as uninspired and academic as its equivalent elsewhere. During the war, the few articles by Soviet critics that appeared in *International Literature* were almost entirely concerned with problems of war writing and morale, and of little general literary interest. Since the war, the chief critical manifestation has been the depressing attack by Andrei Zhdanov on two writers named Akhmatova and Zoschenko, as well as on general aspects of Soviet culture. Zhdanov's attack appears to mark a return to the senseless tradition of the politician's laying down a literary "line" that so much inhibited Soviet criticism in the past, and seems an unhappy omen. He announced that the "great historical mission" of Soviet literature is "strengthening the moral and political unity of the people"; resurrected scapegoats dead for a quarter of a century, like the manifesto of the Serapion Brotherhood in 1922; and even revived the old turkey of scorn for the "outwardly beautiful form" of inwardly "rotten" bourgeois culture. Despite this setback, and with no particular evidence to go on, we can only hope that Soviet critics of the type of Levin and Kashkeen, the legitimate successors of Marx, Plekhanov, and Lunacharsky, have somehow continued over the last decade, and are continuing now, to build the truly Marxist Soviet criticism their work promises.

VI

The faults of Marxist literary criticism, the fact that so much of it has been written in the last two decades, and so little of it has come to anything, thus stem from a number of sources. Some of them are implicit in Marx and Engels; that is, in Marxist theory itself: the rosy nineteenth-century teleological evolutionism of Hegel, whereby the world would get progressively better and better, art dropping off somewhere along the line with other imperfect human expressions; the concentration on what men have in common at any given time, tending to slight their differences, which are the seeds of art; the constant confusion between interpreting the world and changing it, between the inevitability of socialism and the necessity of bringing it on by revolutionary action, between understanding the class nature of literature and making writers enlist in your class or party. Many of them come in with Lenin and to a lesser extent with other

leaders: the revolutionist's unyielding absolutism, the busy politician's untrained philistine taste, the dedicated man's puritanic resentment of the temptations of art. Some of them are accidental Russian features that have been foolishly adopted by Marxists in other countries: the critical moralism and narrow functionalism of the "enlighteners" and Tolstoy, the special educational necessities of a new socialist country with a largely illiterate population. The principal faults, however, are none of these things, but the personal deficiencies of most of the Marxist critics. These are chiefly three. First, as Arnold said of the Romantics, they do not know enough, either enough history or enough literature. As Plekhanov wrote, noting that Michelangelo said his teaching would procreate a great number of ignoramuses: "Nowadays it is Marx's teaching which is procreating ignoramuses." Second, most of them do not really like literature, or wide areas of it, and use Marxism as a weapon for killing it off. Third, they do not have enough imagination; their categories are too narrow, and their views too simple and mechanical. Examples could be obtained almost everywhere, but perhaps the clearest illustration is V. F. Calverton's *The Liberation of American Literature*. He didn't know American history, and he hadn't read, let alone understood, much American literature. He didn't much like it, either, particularly its great artists, its Hawthornes, Melvilles, and Thoreaus. Finally, his categories were far too narrow and his thinking childish. He announced that we had no Puritan art and that Franklin was opposed to art, thinking of the Greek arts, whereas Parrington and Constance Rourke, with a broader definition of art, recognized the "drama" in Indian treaties, the "lyric" in sermons, and the "art" of Franklin's fine printing. Finally, he was obsessed, as almost all the bad Marxist critics have been, with the term "escape" and "escapist."

It is about time someone polished off the term "escape" as a critical concept. Used as a Marxist term of abuse by such men as Michael Gold, it tends to mean that any writing about the past is a wicked avoidance of contemporary social reality. As F. O. Matthiessen sensibly pointed out in *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot,* "Only the narrowest conception of realism can hold that an author necessarily acquires any sovereign virtue by recording the surface details of a middle western city instead of those of eighteenth-century Peru." As generally used, however, the charge smuggles in a much more absurd assumption, actually the height of flattery to the reviled author, that it really is possible for him to "escape"

the problems of his life and time in his work if he wants to, rather than, as Kenneth Burke has devoted much of his criticism to pointing out, facing them inevitably on another level, in another form, generally one on which they are less capable of realistic solution. In *Permanence and Change,* Burke writes:

> Properly used, the idea of escape should present no difficulties. If a situation is unsatisfactory, it is quite normal and natural that people should want to avoid it and should try any means at their disposal to do so. But the term escape has had a more restricted usage. Whereas it properly applies to *all* men, there was an attempt to restrict its application to *some* men. . . . In the end, the term came to be applied loosely, in literary criticism especially, to designate any writer or reader whose interests or aims did not closely coincide with those of the critic. While apparently defining a *trait of the person referred to,* the term hardly did more than convey the *attitude of the person making the reference.* It looked objective, as though the critic were saying "X is doing so-and-so"; but too often it became merely a strategic way of saying, "I personally don't like what X is doing."

Marxist criticism would discard meaningless battle-cries like "escape," "ivory tower," the pejorative use of "decadent," and the rest, if Marxist critics recognized that their sociological analysis is a tool for the understanding of literature, not the debunking of it, "unmasking its ideology," etc. In a sense, this would violate the whole Marxist tradition, which, as a theory of interpreting society inextricably bound up with overthrowing it, sees all analysis in terms of present struggles and weapons. It would require making the "essence" of Marxism for literary criticism neutral, not polemic. Nevertheless, in a deeper sense, the sense in which the truth is always political, is always a revolutionary weapon, it would violate only shortsighted Marxism, the sacrifice of truth for immediate expediency. It was this that Marx and Engels saw in Balzac, as later Marxists have seen it in writers like Proust: that the *truthfulness* of great art results in a portrayal of social reality, whatever the class or views of the artist, more valuable to Marxism than all the pious slantings of propaganda artists.

Like Freud and psychoanalysis, Marx and Marxism can be of tremendous use to criticism if the critic has a clear delimitation of what the method can and cannot do. Psychoanalysis, Freud admitted, can deal with the personal origins and psycho-symbolic interrelations of the work, but not with its formal artistic techniques and its aesthetic value. Similarly, Marxism can deal with the social origins and socio-symbolic interrelations

of the work, but it can, in addition, deal with its formal artistic techniques to some extent in social and historical terms, and in the same terms it can make rather limited statements of aesthetic value. What it *cannot* do is use its social analysis as a technique for debunking, erect reflection-of-social-reality as the major criterion of aesthetic value, or dismiss the author, his psyche, and his personal artistry as factors less important than social and historical factors. It is within these strict limits that the critics who have made the most effective use of Marxism in moderation—Burke, Empson, Matthiessen, Knights, etc.—have operated. The best Marxist critics, from Plekhanov to Christopher Caudwell, have recognized similar limitations.

NATURE'S NE'ER-DO-WELL

By KENNETH W. HUNT

WE HUMAN BEINGS have for some time fancied ourselves to be quite the masters of our environment. Our worries concern our relations among ourselves, rather than our relation to the other species of life and to the soil, air, and water from which life springs. This world of nature, we feel, has long since lost its threat for all but the superstitious. As intelligent beings, we claim to have risen above nature and to stand apart from it.

On the other hand, we are anxious indeed about the worsening relations among ourselves. The demands for living-space; the bitter struggles for coal, ore, petroleum, and other natural resources; the clashes of rival ideologies, each claiming the power to bring about the more abundant life—of such disputes come our wars. Leaving aside the spectre of an atomic holocaust, it is none the less evident that with our intricate production and distribution mechanism we cannot both fight and eat. The earth is feeding its huge human population only by virtue of elaborate scientific and economic arrangements, which, when interrupted, result in wholesale starvation.

Are we, then, so well ahead of the game in the control of nature? Or is not the very insufficiency of our control a prime factor in our political instability? If so, why is our control so insecure, despite our proud scientific progress? And is this a modern problem only, or has it repeatedly been a factor in the rise and fall of nations and of civilizations? To answer these questions, let us turn to the perspective of ecology, or the relationship of life to environment. Let us consider the nature of man's environment; how in his fragmentary knowledge man has devised means of changing this environment; and how in turn the altered environment has reacted upon man.

II

Picture life, if you will, as a pyramid, with man just now at the apex. Its base is the soil—a complex of mineral materials, of decaying organic materials or humus, and of living micro-organisms. The soil supports

vegetation, which in turn supports insect and animal life, which nourishes higher species, up to man at the summit. Each layer depends on those below, and each returns essential substances to the base—to the soil. Man is the first organism with the power to cut through this pyramid to the base, disrupting its structure and interrupting or preventing the return of materials to the soil. Under man's attacks the whole structure has become shaky from a weakened base.

To explain further how man has damaged his base, the soil itself, I must supplement the pyramid analogy by speaking of cycles. Consider first the carbon cycle. Carbon dioxide from the air, and water from the soil, are combined through the means of light energy and chlorophyll into carbohydrates in the plant body. These may pass to the animal body, or human body, and during life, by respiration, some carbon dioxide is returned to the atmosphere; after death the bodies, plant, animal, and human, are returned to the soil, where bacterial action reduces them to humus, and eventually the remaining carbon is released as carbon dioxide. Or occasionally some becomes stored in coal and petroleum, and returns to the atmosphere only after recovery and combustion.

This cycle can be short-circuited—and man is very good at that. Vegetation is burned, soil is exposed and oxidation of the humus hastened, crops are consumed by industry as well as for food, and the wastes are burned or sent to the sea. Human bodies do not return to the same fields that fed them, and of livestock bodies nothing is left to go to any field at all. As a continually larger proportion of the plant and animal species are either routed to the food and industrial needs of man or else exterminated, this short circuit grows, at the expense of the soil. One of the three essential components of soil—the humus—is rapidly diminishing. A second essential component—the bacteria and other micro-organisms—also diminishes in consequence. Soil then might as well be ground-up rock.

But what harm in that? Wouldn't soil still have the essential mineral nutrients? Perhaps, but not for long. The bodies it feeds could not again return to soil, without the help of bacteria—a long chain of them—and not all could operate in the sterile soil. Then there is the nitrogen cycle, which we can't stop to examine except to note that nitrogenous materials from bodies cannot be utilized by plants until converted into the proper salts by certain bacteria. And in the water cycle would be the most serious

break of all, due to the absence of humus. This spongy material is chiefly responsible for preserving soil moisture and soil structure. Without it plants die of drought, soil comes apart and washes or blows away. The end result would be not merely ground-up rock, but solid rock itself, and life would be beaten back to the simpler water organisms from which we came.

Of course such an extreme would not be reached, because men would perish long before that point, and the pyramid, purged of the disease of civilization, would gradually build back again. And why would men perish before the soil is gone? Because it would be incomplete, even in its mineral portion. Soil without humus loses essential nutrients. Mineral salts are leached from the dead soil, until without calcium, without phosphorous, or iron, or magnesium or sulphur it can no longer nourish life. The higher forms seem more susceptible to such starvation than the lower. If the soil lacks iron, spinach grows almost without iron; but if spinach lacks iron, we suffer. Witness the anemic Georgia and Florida "crackers." The soils by the Great Lakes lack iodine, and people have goitre; in the southern Appalachians they lack calcium, and the people have rickets.

In some regions, as in the goitre belt, soil deficiencies are due to vicissitudes of geologic history, but man multiplies these deficiencies wherever he resides. Then as the soil weakens, so does he. This relationship is now the subject of enthusiastic research by agronomists and nutritionists. Not only anemia and rickets, but many forms of gastrointestinal, arthritic, and heart disorders have been traced to soil deficiencies in the region of the food supply. So, too, have been many allergies. Of course the relationship is obscured by other factors in man: one, psychic factors, which can interfere with the functioning of a body otherwise well nourished, and two, the diversity of origin of our foods, which tends to postpone the final day of reckoning. The relationships are clearer with livestock, in which most of the noninfectious diseases have been demonstrated to be nutritional. But conclusive studies with human beings are numerous. Dr. Weston A. Price conducted experiments in a school for problem children in Cleveland. Advanced tooth decay was prevalent among them. This was traced to the inadequacy of the food given to the cows from which their milk came. Dr. Price added calcium and phosphorus to the children's diet, and cessation of dental decay was apparent in about six weeks.

It is reported that Furman E. Bear, when teaching soil chemistry at Ohio State University, used to look over his class at the first lecture and pick out the boys from the limestone regions of the state. He did it by their build—calcium makes bone.

Truly, we are what we eat, and numerous medical authorities, among them Alexis Carrel, Jonathan Forman, and Dr. Price, carry the chain of soil, plant, animal, and human health right through to moral conduct and social effects. Jacob G. Lipman, former president of the Association of Land Grant Colleges, sums it up this way: "Soil decadence is usually followed by social and political decadence. . . . Too large a proportion of undersized animals and humans may occur in some regions because of mineral deficiencies in their food or because of an inadequate supply of food."

Such is the story, in part, of what man has done to his environment, and what his actions have cost him. Clearly, he does not yet stand apart. He is still as closely bound to the soil as Antaeus of old—only the soils are not now as good as those that supported that legendary giant.

III

Have we but just now reached a day of reckoning? Or has nature for a long time back, now here, now there, been exacting her penalties, while we went our way in ignorance of our losses? With these questions in mind, let us retrace episodes in history. For it may be that man's history has been shaped at least as much by his treatment of his natural environment as by his conquests, inventions, and philosophies.

Man's difficulties seem to begin when he hit upon the idea of domesticating animals for milk and meat. Human beings then apparently multiplied, until their growing herds began to starve for lack of forage. Then began the nomadic mode of life—man's first experiment in living on borrowed capital. Having exhausted the resources at one place, he borrowed from another. Next was the invention of cultivation—of rice in eastern China, of wheat and barley in Mesopotamia. This permitted a really great increase in population. Commerce developed, cities grew; the soils gave, but the cities did not give back. The borrowing became stealing. As Paul B. Sears puts it: "Fertility was consumed and soil destroyed at a rate far in excess of the capacity of either man or nature to replace."

Falling in this way into the habit of living beyond his means, man has become nature's ne'er-do-well. Of his many faults, one of the most persistent is heedlessness. Like the rich man's son who has inherited a fortune, he uses it with abandon, believing it inexhaustible, with no comprehension of the idea that the estate must be managed in such a way as to perpetuate itself. The history of this ne'er-do-well repeats itself over and over. It is dimly seen in Mesopotamia. Ancient literature records forested mountains, from which the Tigris and Euphrates flowed. From these rivers the Chaldeans and then the Babylonians watered their fertile plains. But by the time the record is clearer, we find the watershed forests gone, floods and water failures playing havoc with the irrigation systems, hungry populations surging back and forth in warfare, until dams are destroyed and the ruin is complete.

Palestine repeats the story. It is told in the Bible, which Russell Lord regards as the record of "country people having a hard time." The Old Testament frequently refers to forests, but nothing more than olive groves is mentioned in the New Testament. The Prophets decried the exploitation. Said Isaiah: "All hills digged with the mattock shall be for the treading of lesser cattle." Asked Ezekiel: "Seemeth it a small thing to you to have eaten up the good pasture?" And David writes fearfully of forest fires.

But the Lebanon forests were cut; floods swept the lowland farms; coarse soil from the overgrazed, eroded hills buried the cropland. For a while the Hebrews checked the process by an extensive system of terraces, irrigation, and drainage canals. They seemed to be gaining, and became renowned for productivity. Antioch rose to a city of 400,000 people in 360 A.D. But wars and conquest destroyed this system; the forces of nature again were loosed; and today ancient Antioch lies beneath twenty-eight feet of sediment. H. H. Bennett, chief of the federal Soil Conservation Service, reports that reforestation in Palestine would be feasible so far as climate is concerned, but that extensive slopes of bare rock make it out of the question in much of the area.

Greece was once a land of forested hilltops and fertile valleys, judging by scattered Aegean islands that have not been stripped. To this ancient landscape we suppose the Greeks owed the inspiration for their temple columns. Apparently the early population was a society of small farmers. By the ninth century B.C., however, population had advanced

to the point of a land shortage—hence the land tenure laws of Lycurgus. Land shortage is fatal to forests—and also to soil. By the fifth century B.C., Xenophon was buying worn-out farms, restoring them, and reselling at a profit. By then, too, society was changing to a system of landlords and slaves. The next step was the conquest and colonization of foreign lands, with the homeland no longer able to support itself. Behind the glory of the Athenean citizens and their imported food and wealth, one sees a hungry, ill-nourished slave population. Then when foreign powers cut this civilization off from its remote food supply, the end was near. Bennett considers it unlikely that the bare rocky hills of modern Greece could support a culture comparable to that of the past.

A recent Soil Conservation Service mission to Greece describes this history for the Vouraikos watershed: In remote times it bore forests of fir and holly oak. Gradually the mountains were cleared and sown to wheat; the steepest portions were grazed, converting oak to chaparral. Today erosion has bared these slopes; the debris has blocked stream channels; once fertile meadows have become swamps, where fans of gravel have spread across the valleys. The finer sediment goes out to sea. Such soils as have been deposited are immature, low in organic matter. This indeed is a skeleton of nature, picked dry by man; and to quote the report, "politics in such areas are the outcome of deep-seated maladjustments of people in getting the needs of life."

This study of the Vouraikos watershed resembles what is known of the ancient Greek colony in Italy. Their records of settlement in the eighth century B.C. report wooded mountain and fertile lowlands. The colonists raised grain for the homeland and cut timber for the Navy. It presently became necessary to provide flood control and irrigation for their city of Sybaris. When in 510 B.C. this city was conquered and its canals destroyed, floods changed the site into malarial swampland. Cultivation was forced farther up the slopes, increasing the erosion.

At this point it is interesting to note what Arnold Toynbee says about the breakdown of civilizations. He, too, cites the malarial swamps of Greece and Italy, and he also notes that formerly they had been controlled with canals and irrigation. But he seems to assume that they had been swamps from the first, instead of a consequence of agricultural abuse. His argument is that a vigorous civilization devises means of handling these, while a declining civilization neglects such means. If I follow him

correctly, he regards the environment as a constant, which a dynamic civilization first controls, then succumbs to, for reasons of spiritual decline. The human ecologist regards both civilization and environment as dynamic and interacting. As Paul Sears puts it, "Man is welcome to outnumber and dominate the other forms of life, provided he can maintain order among the relentless forces whose balanced operation he has disrupted."

As for the Romans, they too at first were farmers, and did creditably. In Cato, Varro, Pliny, Virgil, and Columella, one finds good agricultural counsel. They recommended experimentation, consideration of the nature of the soil and of the slope, the use of contours and terracing, the value of legumes and crop rotation. But with conquest and empire this changed. The small farms became great estates, production declined, and grain was imported from Africa. Again we find undernourished masses.

Western Europe, of course, was mostly a forested land. Now for the first time industry takes the blame for resource destruction. During the Middle Ages, European forests were largely destroyed to provide charcoal for steel manufacturers. As for agriculture, the problem in that West Coast climate was not erosion but nutrient depletion. The leached, unfertilized soils soon played out. Medieval painting is notable for its emaciated and anemic subjects, and we have naturally associated this condition with sainthood, since all the paintings are religious. But in all probability the saints were physically no different from anybody else in that age of malnutrition. The chief exceptions would be the monks. They are famous both for their skillful gardening and well-fed bodies, and well they might be, as the only people who knew the lore of Columella and the other Roman agriculturists.

As for the feudal lords, we should be unable to squeeze into their puny size-30 armor plate. Sears notes that as the generations passed they moved to new castles and suggests that this is evidence that the soils in the old neighborhood were no longer supplying them with food, nourishing or otherwise. The usual assumption has been that they were driven out of the old home by the accumulated filth, but Sears doubts that they were that sensitive!

So much for the Old World. The story has become a bit monotonous. In the New World we find a welcome exception—the Empire of the Incas. They were no ne'er-do-wells, but had long since learned their lesson

and put their agriculture on a pay-as-you-go basis—at terrific cost in human labor. Their mountainsides had been converted by amazing stone terraces into hanging gardens, filled by hand with soil, fertilized with guano from the coast islands, and irrigated by a remarkable system of aqueducts. The tragic collapse of these people after the Spanish Conquest was certainly no fault of the Incas. Arthur E. Morgan suggests that it may be chiefly attributed to disease—the European infections brought by the Spaniards, such as measles and pox, against which they had no resistance. As for the conquistadors, their exploits repeat the old Greek and Roman stories: a homeland denuded and eroded; an economy sustained by conquest abroad. When the British broke their sea power, their nation subsided, and it has been notable for its poverty ever since.

The very different civilization of the Mayas in Central America has been the subject of much speculation, but if you will accept the report of C. Wythe Cooke of the U.S. Geological Survey, it constitutes the most dramatic example of environmental vengeance on record. In the sixth century they were a nation of 13,000,000, with a population density equal to that of England a century ago. Suddenly, before the end of that century, their lands and cities were abandoned and their second empire was established far to the north in Yucatan.

Today, still farther north in Yucatan, their humble descendants practice a migratory agriculture. They burn the forest to clear new land, crop it for two or three years, and move on. The clearing has been so leached, oxidized, and eroded in that brief time as to be almost wholly unproductive.

Cooke concludes that the people of the first empire made the same mistake of clearing the tropical slopes. Burning destroys humus; tropical heat and rain leaches raw soil; crops fail, fields are abandoned, and the mantle is swept into the valleys. The lakes are filled with sediment and converted into swamps. Cooke's thesis is evidenced by carbonaceous clay deposits representing surface soil washed from the uplands.

Are there then no civilizations that have supported large populations without exhaustion of resources? What of Egypt, India, China? Have they not struck a balance that has endured? In a way they have, though certainly not one that would keep an American happy. But their balance includes far more than meets the eye. Egypt is watered and fertilized by the Nile, one of the world's great rivers.

As for China and India, their great rivers collect tribute from Asia's interior to spread over their plains, and have been doing so for millions of years. Moreover, the Orientals, through long experience, have recognized nature's demands more realistically than have we "scientific" Occidentals. They have long since been thoroughly completing the carbon and nitrogen cycles by scrupulously returning every bit of animal and human excrement to the vegetable patch.

IV

So now what of America: where after milleniums of heedlessness in the Old World, nature's ne'er-do-wells from Europe have been given another chance? On the whole they seem to have behaved like locusts. True, in the early days of the republic, some wise and influential words were spoken. It was Patrick Henry who declared, "He is the greatest patriot who stops the most gullies." Thomas Jefferson was a famous agriculturist. One of his letters, reporting an unusually violent storm, relates that "Mr. Randolph's farm is the only one which has not suffered, as horizontal furrows arrested the water at every step until it was absorbed or at least had deposited the soil it had taken up. Everybody in the neighborhood is adopting this method of plowing, except tenants who have no interest in the preservation of the soil." This might have been written by a county agent yesterday!

George Washington remarked acidly: "Our lands were originally very good, but use and misuse have made them quite otherwise. We ruin the lands that are already cleared, and either cut down more wood, if we have it, or emigrate to the Western country." You can submit this testimony to those who regard soil erosion merely as a New Deal hue and cry!

But these warnings were indeed forgotten almost until the time of the New Deal. As Washington observed, we emigrated to the western country. We discovered unheard-of abundance, and believed the new land utterly inexhaustible. In our exuberance we rushed on, scorning anything but the fat of the land. A well-worn story of the Department of Agriculture tells of the farmer who asserts, "You can't tell me nothing about farming. I've wore out two farms already, and now I'm working on my third."

In this fashion we spanned the continent, repeating the story of nature's ne'er-do-well in record time. No land in all history, except that of

the Mayas in the unstable tropics, ever deteriorated so rapidly. We work faster, you see, because we use science and engineering. And we acquired an unbounded vitality. Of this, of course, we are exceedingly proud. There's something about us—our love of liberty, our moral fervor, our generous spirit—we're a race apart. *We* would never stoop to aggression nor imperialism. Well, maybe, but how did we get that way? We're all of European origin. But we *are* taller and heavier. We do win out in the Olympics. These cubits added to our stature weren't the result of taking thought. So what was it? I know of no better explanation than a virgin soil. We escaped from the exhausted fields of Western Europe, depleted of mineral nutrients, to a land of full nourishment. We poised at the peak of a rich, undamaged pyramid of life—felt strong, swung our picks, and began the heedless attack!

Today we have anxiously begun to look about. We no longer feel so strong. We are weakening, like Antaeus, when separated from the earth. Tenant farming has rapidly increased. We no longer can scrape up a food surplus with ease. (It is true that numerous scientific techniques have increased our per acre production, but not in proportion to our population, and fewer acres are productive.)

So if the pattern of the past were to be repeated, we would eventually find ourselves in the role of aggressors and imperialists after all. It has happened, every time a vigorous nation got hungry. But in this twentieth century, other nations, already hungry, undertake wars from which we cannot remain apart. For us the day of reckoning comes ahead of time. Today the world is crowded and strained as never before, and we are possessed of the fantastic power of atomic energy. Is there finally no escape for nature's ne'er-do-well?

Before going on, there is another aspect of man's attack on natural resources that must be mentioned. During the past century, as the Industrial Revolution gained momentum, we began the mass removal of mineral and fuel resources. We suddenly converted our civilization from a basis of stone and wood to one of steel and coal and oil. This phase may soon pass, as the history of civilization is measured. Nature's underground storehouse, the accumulation of hundreds of millions of years, is perhaps half empty after the first century of large-scale use. Moreover, in the last war, we used more petroleum than the total of all our previous drain.

We have fought our last war on American oil, and probably also on American iron ore, as well as several other materials.

This dramatic squandering of mineral resources, while beautifully characteristic of nature's ne'er-do-well, is a much lesser danger to civilization than his treatment of the soils. After all, cultures flourished amid wood and stone, and could do so again, if people can eat.

Of course, the readjustment would be a violent process. But that course is most unlikely, for we will undoubtedly work out new sources of energy, and perhaps in sufficient time, or at least as Thornton Wilder puts it, by "The Skin of Our Teeth." Perhaps it will be atomic energy; perhaps photosynthesis.

As for building materials, steel is sufficiently durable to be used over and over for a very long time to come, meeting at least the heaviest of our needs. That is, if we would stop blowing it to bits and junking battleships of it at the bottom of the sea. Then for our lighter usages, new developments in plastics bid to replace the metals in many ways. This has been hailed as the substitution of renewable for exhaustible material. Plastics come from forests, cornstalks, cotton—plant cellulose and lignin—sources which can be cropped instead of mined. A serious question remains, however: if we adopt this wholesale use of plant bodies for our insatiable civilization, will we not then be mining the soil more seriously than ever? Even if we learn meticulously to return all our rubbish to the compost heap, we may be disappointed, for plastics are indigestible to the soil bacteria. In supplying industry from the soil we may be only aggravating our fundamental problem, that of getting food.

So is there no way out? Are we hopelessly caught between our natural fecundity, abetted by the humane skill of medical science, and our sorely injured environment? Can we not escape from the Malthusian controls of starvation, disease, and violence?

Some authorities believe we could turn the trick if we could raise the world's standard of living sufficiently, since birthrate and living standards seem to be in inverse relation to each other. But that seems like small hope; it is like telling the man who missed the boat that all will be well if he swims fast enough. He will look around for a more available aid—even if it be a straw. What would suffice? Edible yeasts? Cultivated fisheries? Factories of plants grown in nutrient solution? Factories capable of artificial photosynthesis, protein synthesis, and a successful blend of

all essential nutrients and vitamins into a synthetic food? My remarks are becoming increasingly H. G. Wellsian. It would not be in the spirit of science to declare any of these impossible, but like the farmer who tried to teach his horse to eat sawdust, I'm willing to allow as how it may take a long time. Of one thing I am sure: we will be engaged in atomic war long before we learn to synthesize food, unless we find other ways out.

As to whether we could survive the next war, I am impressed by the reasoning of Orlando Park. The phenomenal growth of mankind and of his agriculture and civilization has carried along with it a corresponding growth of his parasites: of the viruses and bacteria that attack his body; of the fungi and insects that attack his crops. If our civilization were broken and our numbers a mere fraction, if our medical, engineering, industrial, and agricultural facilities were all in ruins, these parasites would, nevertheless, remain as numerous as ever, but we would stand defenseless, hopelessly overwhelmed by hordes of pests and pestilence such as never confronted the husky Stone-Age man.

How can anyone believe that man stands supreme, lord of his environment!

V

One circumstance, at least, is in our favor: our predicament is today dramatically clear, more unmistakable, more widely recognized, than ever before in history. Perhaps today nature's ne'er-do-well is less heedless and more frightened. If so, there is hope. Certainly those who study agriculture are conscious of our sins, and like Isaiah, are shouting them to the nation. You hear it from all sides:

"We have mined the soil—we must fertilize, we must lime, we must rotate and diversify.

"We have broken the carbon cycle—we must recover our straw, we must mulch, we must disk, we must grow cover crops.

"We have broken the nitrogen cycle—we must inoculate the soil, we must plant legumes, we must recover our precious sewerage resource.

"We have broken the water cycle—we must reforest our watersheds, we must rebuild our organic soil, we must strip-crop, contour, terrace."

Thus the litany being heard across the land. But it is far from enough. Can we ever do enough? Let us review some of the progress and the problems.

Most remarkable have been the accomplishments of the Soil Conservation Service. In some fifteen years, working with inspired leadership on a job desperately urgent, the SCS has converted over 60,000,000 acres from deterioration to increasing fertility and productivity. What is more, the new practices, as recited above, are gradually winning favor among farmers over far wider areas.

Several of the older services continue to render indispensable aid in saving the soil. Notable among these are the U.S. Forest Service; the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering; and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

If these efforts succeed in preserving the soils in the United States, then we will have eliminated in our country a chief cause of the failure of former civilizations. There will remain, however, the problem of sufficient production increase to supply not only ourselves but the more urgent of the demands from abroad. For with political consciousness awakening the world around, no nation will long endure the rule of Malthus. Then beyond the problem of quantity will remain that of quality. Though we retain our soils, though we perhaps double their output, how shall we avoid exhausting their nutritive values?

Gains in production in recent years have been quite impressive. They are due to a long list of scientific achievements, some of which may be of interest here.

Plant and animal breeding: genetic research has produced disease-resistant animals, animals of higher productive capacity, disease- and insect-resistant plants, plants more hardy and others maturing in shorter seasons, plants of higher nutritive value, and numerous other gains. Especially notable is the development of hybrid corn, which yields 25 per cent on the average above the ordinary kinds. Such achievements will doubtless be extended to other crops; perhaps new crops will be developed from native wild species; perhaps tree crops as well as field crops will benefit.

Insecticides: following on the improved equipment for dusting and spraying with poisons and contact oils has come the remarkable new insecticide, DDT. This chemical is so effective that caution is required in its use to prevent harm to insects essential for pollination.

Herbicides: until recently the age-old methods of cultivation and mowing remained the most effective for weed control. Now a chemical

referred to as 2,4-D may be used to kill broad-leaved weeds growing among grasses. Research is going forward on its application to pasture improvement and soil treatment. Possibly even more selective herbicides are in the offing.

Fungicides: advances in fungus control have been less spectacular, but superior spreading and sticking qualities have been imparted to existing fungicides by the use of soaps and casein. Some rust fungi are controlled by the systematic eradication of alternate host plants, and spores of some other diseases are killed by seed-sterilization treatment.

Plant auxins: these substances that regulate plant growth have been recently detected and utilized to stimulate development of seedlings, cuttings, roots, and grafts; to prevent fruit drop; and to initiate fruit development without pollination.

Farm machinery: along with these numerous aids to higher production has developed the machinery to handle the increased production—to enable fewer men to farm more acres. Horses and mules are disappearing before the rubber-tired tractor. There are machines for planting, tilling, spraying. Harvesting crews are diminishing as combines, corn-pickers, cotton-pickers, potato-diggers and balers increase. Perhaps the latest development is the sugar-beet harvester, eliminating one of the most costly of field operations.

Farm by-products: from much of what was waste is now produced a great diversity of foods, fibers, drugs, and industrial materials. Cornstalks, cobs, and hulls appear as fiberboard, paper, rubber, glucose, and alcohol. Cannery wastes become culture media for yeasts, bacteria, and antibiotic compounds. From feathers, hooves, hair, and horn are extracted nonfood proteins for use in various adhesives, fibers, and plastics. Other materials that go into fibers and plastics include wood flour, cotton linters, oat hulls, soybean meal, and skim milk. At first thought, these new materials appear to be something from nothing, coming from what was once waste. Much of this waste, however, formerly returned to the soil, and we must take into account, as mentioned already, the additional drain on the soil which these by-products represent.

Actually, this list of production-increasing techniques only emphasizes the remaining and most basic problem—how to maintain the fertility and nutritive value of the soil. Some progress has been made, to be sure. Quality as well as quantity is preserved by such soil conservation

practices as planting cover crops and turning them under, increased use of legumes, crop rotation, and stubble-mulch tillage. But the fact remains that we remove far more than we return, and unless we can honestly balance the soil budget, we are mining the soil and undermining human vitality. Therefore, research is urgent in several neglected areas. I here mention a few, and doubtless others will be coming to the fore.

Organic fertilizing: much attention to this problem has been aroused by the fervent efforts of the "organic school," under the leadership of the late Sir Albert Howard. Their methods of large-scale composting of rubbish and plant wastes with animal and even human excrement are of great significance. I am sure all such material must be finally used in balancing the soil budget.

Sewage conversion: we must also attend to the huge loss of organic matter flushed through city sewer systems into the rivers and the sea. Sewage disposal must give way to sewage conversion, until we can return to the soil a product rich in organic matter, mineral nutrients, and beneficial micro-organisms. A beginning has been made by several cities, as at Milwaukee, where the activated sludge process is in operation. Further research on this process is being carried on by the United States Public Health Service.

Chemical fertilizing: the application of mineral nutrients needs to be greatly increased, and their quality must improve as rapidly as our growing knowledge of soil chemistry and plant and animal nutrition permits. The fears of the "organic school" regarding harmful effects of mineral fertilizers may be compared to a patient's anxiety about the pills administered by his doctor. With proper diagnosis and prescription their value is plain. Though ideally the soil and the body should both function without such aids, it should be evident from the preceding pages that conditions are not ideal, and are hardly likely to become so under the burden of our civilization. Our goal should be to supply better pills to the soil and thus require fewer for ourselves.

Soil science: obviously, for good diagnosis and prescription we need far more knowledge of the patient. It is strange that scientists have so long neglected to study the soil. Now, at last, chemists, physicists, and microbiologists are combining forces to gain an understanding of this most complex foundation of the pyramid of life. The physician studying the human body has no more intricate task than the soil scientist en-

deavoring to comprehend the interrelationships of rock particles, air, water, chemicals dissolved and ionized, bacteria, fungi, algae, protozoa, insects, worms, plant roots, plant and animal residues and excreta, and the dynamic processes constantly involving all of these. The objectives of soil science include the ability to discover wherein a given soil is deficient—in structure, nutrient value, micro-organisms—and to remedy the deficiency in a way ultimately most effective for human nutrition.

Nutrition: hand-in-hand with our growing ability to manage the soils there must be increasing knowledge of nutritive requirements. Botanists have long been engaged in determining the mineral nutrient requirements of plants. Much has been learned by the technique of hydroponics, whereby plants are grown in distilled water to which known quantities of pure chemicals have been added. Though the major requirements are now well known, the list of "trace elements" is still growing. Susceptibility of plants to disease and insect attack increases in proportion to the deficiency of certain elements in the plant body. There are indications that when we save such defective crops (through use of fungicides and insecticides), the same mineral deficiency appears in the animals and men that they feed. Moreover, nutritional studies have noted several elements, seemingly unnecessary to the plant but vital to the animal, which are transmitted from soil through plant to animal. Therefore the testimony of nutritional studies at all levels needs to be utilized by those engaged in managing the soil.

Ecology: just as physics, chemistry, and microbiology combined into soil science are indispensable for agriculture, so the skills of botany, zoology and geography combined with soil science into ecology are necessary for wise land use as a whole. Man's multiplicity of needs and interests have led to confusion and conflict in the use of the land. Cropland, range land, forest, watershed, mining areas, land for recreation and land for living and industry—all of these crowd upon each other. In southeast Ohio, forest was swept away to make farms, then farms were ripped into spoil banks by the strip mining of coal. Both events seemed imperative in their time. But what to do next with that tumbled, mutilated ground? It is a problem for the ecologist even more than the engineer. Our whirlwind sweep across the continent has left a chaos of problems. Since we have disorganized nature, it is up to us consciously to achieve another organized pattern. Our best effort to date is that of the Tennessee Valley

Authority. One of the lessons demonstrated by the TVA is the value of integration, of fusing fragments of knowledge into wholes. Indispensable to this process is the ecologist, whose business is to assess the interrelationships of life and environment.

This review of scientific progress and problems seems definitely encouraging. We already have the knowledge to do far better. But too many of us are like the farmer who confesses, "I don't farm half as good as I know how." We know some of the areas where more knowledge must be sought. But we are reluctant to pay taxes and contribute endowments to buy this knowledge. The legislation for a National Science Foundation is blocked by our faltering faith in the capacity of democratic government. We realize the urgent need, but mistrust ourselves to discharge it. In this respect, science may be compared to a factory of proven capacity and skilled personnel, which suffers from confused and discordant ownership. Under these circumstances it produces inefficiently, and its products are poorly distributed and ill used.

The problem, then, goes beyond the scope of science, to the fields of economics, sociology, and education. This is well understood in our Department of Agriculture, which labors unceasingly through such agencies as the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Farm Credit Administration, and the Farmers' Home Administration. Education is also conducted on the state level through the Agricultural Extension Services and the Vocational Agriculture teachers. We should realize that the farmer, as custodian of our most basic resource, must have the security, equipment, and education necessary for competent performance. These things might be reckoned in the price of food, just as the expense of industrial research laboratories is included in the cost of radios, gasoline, and telephone service. We should also realize that traditional rights of property ownership do not justify violation of recognized principles of wise land use. One of the most heartening signs of the times is the relocation of property lines by neighboring farm owners to permit contour layouts. But at the same time, we note with dismay the efforts of livestock operators to regain control of Taylor Act grazing lands through appeals of propaganda rather than science.

Paul Sears has put it most aptly: "In all his studies of the pests and predators which handicap him, man has not taken sufficient account of the chief, which is man himself."

* * *

My support of human ecology in this paper as a key to the interpretation of history may have seemed quite materialistic. I expressed disagreement with Toynbee's point that decline of a civilization is brought about by a collapse of spirit rather than of environment. Nor do I believe with him that civilizations on fresh ground grow strong because of the challenge of great difficulties. I think they owe their success to the mineral nutrients in that fresh ground. Nonetheless, I do agree with his basic position: that history can be interpreted spiritually. A spiritual blindness has been present in mankind from the beginning, and because of this in most instances his civilizations have been doomed from the outset. Man is a heedless ne'er-do-well because he thinks he is a separate entity. Each man feels that he, personally, is the most important thing on earth. He refuses to acknowledge that he is part of the social organism, mankind itself. Still less does he realize that mankind in turn is part of the entire organism of the living world. Of this system, no segment, large or small, can long live apart. How far the hierarchy goes we cannot see, nor do we need to; let us call the totality God Himself.

These relationships have been repeatedly proclaimed by the great religions. One of the plainest statements, to my mind, is "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." But nature's ne'er-do-well has not yet heeded. One wonders if the new emphasis, contributed by science to the old truth, can yet be heeded, and in time.

Note: For the information related here concerning agriculture in former times and in other lands, the writer is indebted to Paul B. Sears (*Deserts on the March,* 1947), H. H. Bennett (*Soil Conservation,* 1939), and Russell Lord (*Behold Our Land,* 1938). He is also indebted to Karl B. Mickey (*Health from the Ground Up*) and to the U.S.D.A. *Yearbook of Agriculture,* 1943-1947, for information on current research in agriculture and nutrition.

TOYNBEE'S NINE BOOKS OF HISTORY AGAINST THE PAGANS

By MORRIS WATNICK

IN THE YEAR 418 A.D., while the Roman Empire was passing through the final phases of a liquidation crisis, its capital city but a melancholy symbol of a moribund world-state, a young Spanish priest, Paulus Orosius, bespoke God in human history. His impassioned apologia for Christianity, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans,* following the trail blazed by his teacher, St. Augustine, thus inaugurated a fashion in the writing of history which has tenaciously maintained its popularity to this day, despite keen competition from rival schools of historical thought. If not a mark of its intellectual stature, it is at least a tribute to its Phoenix-like viability that today, some 1500 years after Orosius indited the original tract, the tradition has once more come into popular fashion. Arnold J. Toynbee's product[1] has a popular appeal that dwarfs the response to Orosius' work; his thesis is infinitely more complex in conception and execution; his tools far more numerous and his craftsmanship more fastidious than those of his precursor. Nevertheless, it is a modern variation of the original Orosian theme.

To Orosius, the purpose and meaning of human history were plain enough: ". . . the human race," he declared, "was created from the beginning that, living under religion . . . it might merit eternity; but it abused the Creator's goodness. Now the patience of God is just and doubly just, operating that this disdain might not wholly ruin those whom He wished to spare . . . and also so that He might hold out guidance . . . to an ignorant creature to whom, if penitent, He might mercifully restore the means of grace." Man's career on earth, then, is a vast cosmic drama, the various acts of which are designed to serve a transcendent and climactic purpose. The generations of man, caught up in its flux, are successively filtered through vast historical catastrophes before their sins can be expiated.

[1] *A Study of History,* Vol I-III (London, 1934), Vol. IV-VI (London, 1939). Three final volumes are in preparation. In this study, I have used the authorized abridged version edited by D. C. Sommervell. All page references are to the abridged volume.

It has become the fashion among those who pride themselves on their emancipation from theological dogmas and on their devotion to what they conceive as "science" to smile with good-humored condescension at this historical eschatology. At first blush, therefore, it may seem odd that Toynbee's theory of history bids fair to become a cult in a world so seemingly far removed from that of an Orosius, a Bossuet or a Hegel. The mystery need not puzzle us too long. The audience which now seems so receptive to Toynbee's blandishments has, in truth, long been schooled for their appearance by a semi-popular metaphysic of "progress" which dexterously employed the language of science to conceal the substance of transcendental religion.

Originating in the lush optimism of the Enlightenment, the message of "progress" was transliterated into biological terms by Spencerian evolutionists, and into economic "laws" by the Marxists of the nineteenth century. The modern mind has been nurtured on this doctrine of inexorable universal progress. Yet, if we remove its secular veneer, what is the theory of progress if not a crypto-eschatology? An Augustine or an Orosius might cavil at its scientific idiom, but its import would find ready assent in their minds.

The crisis of our age has opened the floodgates to a wave of antirationalism which the achievements of science had, for a time, rendered unfashionable. Now that scientific values are everywhere being called into question, those who once subscribed to the fashionable "scientific" theory of progress, now feel free to shift to an undisguised theodicy, discarding the outer garb while preserving the inner substance. Whatever else it may be, then, Toynbee's theory of history is a superb guide to the temper of our times!

II

The reception accorded Toynbee's first six volumes and their abridged version defies all previous records set by works of comparable design and scope. *A Study of History* comes to close quarters with some of the most elusive and baffling problems of the human mind; it ranges freely throughout the entire ambit of universal history and bears the imprint of a terrifying and voracious erudition. Toynbee's superlative talents of exposition and gifts of evocative imagery are, therefore, insufficient to account for its phenomenal appeal. It is more plausible to suppose that,

whatever the final verdict on his stature as a philosopher of history may be, his current following derives primarily from the fact that his work is in perfect accord with the prevailing "failure of nerve." We are witnessing today a recrudescence of an extreme antirationalism, a transcendental escapism, and a general impatience with rigorous scientific method. The ground has been well prepared in advance for the appearance of the most ambitious transcendental reconstruction of man's past ever undertaken since the days of Augustine and Orosius.

The scales usually employed in weighing the contributions of most narrative or descriptive works of history cannot avail us when we are confronted with a work of Toynbee's dimensions. A macrocosmic universal history which seeks to chart the main lines of human history under an all-inclusive formula cannot but fail to do violence to many of its "raw" facts. And if microscopic accuracy with respect to the data were our only concern, no great effort would be required to enumerate Toynbee's "errors." Taken by themselves, however, they do not necessarily impair the value of the work. What is required is not a point-for-point inspection of the historical minutiae of such a work, but an appraisal of its philosophic foundations and logical scaffolding. A few loose bricks and even an occasional fissure in the walls need not cause the collapse of a building, but a badly laid foundation or a faulty supporting structure should make us hesitate before we make it our work or dwelling place.

I propose, therefore, to examine Toynbee's theoretical structure in terms of its own universe of discourse and to inquire to what extent it fulfils its own stated purpose—"the enlightenment of the mind rather than the burdening of the memory." Are its central propositions coherent and self-consistent? Are they stated in a form which permits the derivation of empirically verifiable conclusions? Does his system of classification have any heuristic value? What is the significance of his radically novel scheme of historical periodization? And finally, what, if any, judgments of value animate the system?

If we examine Toynbee's system in the light of questions such as these, we shall find that the tools and materials which entered into its construction are too feeble to sustain the ponderous edifice. At the very outset of the study, we are confronted, for example, with a methodological lapse which vitiates much of the whole thesis: What is a "civilization?" (Toynbee employs such crucial concepts as "civilization," "culture," and

"society" interchangeably all too frequently.) His adroit manipulation of the materials of history in tracing the parentage, careers, and offsprings of his twenty-one specimens is impressive only as long as one does not ask him to define what he understands by that term. The definition he attempts is a dangerously deceptive evasion. A civilization (or society), he tells us, may be defined as any segment of humanity which constitutes "an intelligible unit of historical study" (p. 11). And if the reader, still unsatisfied, asks what makes it "intelligible," the silence of *A Study of History* makes it painfully clear that it is a purely nominal definition, completely lacking in operational utility.

That this has not altogether escaped Toynbee's attention is evidenced in another connection. Western Christian and Orthodox Christian societies, he tells us, can be differentiated on the basis of their religious origins —the schism within the church—but the Sunnie-Shi'it conflict within Islamic society did not bring a new society into existence (pp. 15-16). And certainly there is no religious unity at the base of Far Eastern society. Toynbee is therefore aware that the differentiating criterion is not religious affiliation. Apart from this implied negative verdict, he cavalierly by-passes the difficulty. In the absence of such a norm, the definition becomes a jejune and unenlightening tautology. For if we ask what makes any particular society an "intelligible unit of study," the Toynbeean formula implies that it is so in virtue of its being a society!

That we are dealing with a sterile tautology in this instance becomes palpably obvious if we apply it to the very example which Toynbee offers as a test case. Traditional history has been, first and foremost, national history. But nations *per se* are not "intelligible units of study." One cannot study the history of English civilization at any point of its development, for instance, without having recourse to a wider set of conditioning influences, originating from outside England. English society, in other words, is simply a species of a larger cultural genus; and while English politics and economics are inseparable parts of a world-wide complex of reciprocal forces, English culture can be made intelligible by a consideration of historic forces operating on a far more restricted geographic scale. All this we grant. But if neither England at one extreme nor the world at the other are "intelligible units," what is? If Western Christendom is a "society" by Toynbeean standards, is not all of Europe, by the same

token, also a meaningful unit? Did it not sire scientific technology and the national state and bequeath them to the world? Is Spain with its large ingredient of Islamic culture a legitimate "Western" community? Is the distinctive texture of Mediterranean culture merely another branch of the same "society" which comprises Britain and Germany? Are the cultures on either side of the Rio Grande a single society of which Scandinavia is also a full-fledged member? Perplexities and misgivings of this nature multiply *ad nauseam* in the wake of any attempt to see the landscape of the world's cultures through Toynbeean blinkers.

If the concept is of dubious value as a taxonomic device, it breaks down completely in a morass of contradictions when it is applied to the dynamics of the cross-fertilization of cultures—even in the hands of so skillful a craftsman as its author. Russia today is obviously a gigantic spectacle of planned cross-fertilization with ultimate consequences, both for Russia and the rest of the world, that defy even the most modest attempts at prognosis. It has opened Russia to the impact of two historic forces of unmistakably Western origin—modern technology and militant Marxism. The cultural end product of their lodgment in the former empire of the Czars provides a crucial proving-ground for Toynbee's analytic weapons. They fail to meet the test. We are informed, on the one hand, that "the only semblance of an effective external challenge to our society since the failure of the Osmanlis' second attempt to take Vienna has been the challenge of Bolshevism" but that, on the other, its triumph "would not mean the triumph of an alien culture, since communism . . . is itself derived from a Western source . . ." (pp. 203-204). And even more explicitly: ". . . a relation which was once an external contact between two separate societies has been transformed into an internal experience of the great society into which Russia has now been incorporated . . ." (p. 240). This leads him to the speculative hypothesis that Russia may yet possibly be the great "creative minority" to the modern West! In view of all this, the critical reader may well ask what justifiable criterion there is for the original distinction between Western Christendom and Eastern Orthodox Society. The dialectical miracle by which Russian communism becomes both an "external challenge" to and an "internal experience" of the West is clearly a defiance of the original formula. And, *en passant,* if communism is of Western derivation, is it

not less forced an interpretation to regard the West as a "challenge" to Russia. The Russian Narodniki of the 1890's were gifted with more prescience than is generally attributed to them!

The tautology thus breeds a contradiction when it is brought to bear on concrete problems of cultural contact. But, unfortunately, definitional ambiguities imply certain misgivings about the system as a whole. If, for example, we cannot properly identify Toynbee's Leviathans with the guidance of the lexicon he has compiled, it is also meaningless to affirm any historical attributes of them. "Genesis," "Growth," "Arrest," "Petrification," "Breakdown," "Disintegration" and other processes borrowed from organic systems are meaningful only to the extent that they describe the behavior of well-defined, identifiable entities. I have tried to show that they do not do this in Toynbee's system and shall return to this problem later. Here it is sufficient to point out that Toynbee himself seems unable to make up his mind as to whether Western society is on the point of senescence or whether it is still a lusty youngster (p. 245). That both conclusions seem to find a welcome accommodation in his study is but another indication that it is methodologically unsophisticated.

The theory of spiral progress which permeates Toynbee's survey of history enables him to escape the snare to which Spengler's ponderous and grim metaphysics fell victim, *viz.,* that of looking upon cultures as logically self-contained units, destined by an inner law of being to trace out a preordained cycle of birth, growth, maturity, and decline. Toynbee, it is clear, has succeeded in steering clear of Spengler's unrealistic schematism. Cultures, to be sure, are subject to some type of cyclical change, but Toynbee is too competent a historian to commit the error of ignoring the linkage between cultures. The cyclical pattern which constitutes the history of any particular society does not blind him to the fact that history in the large is cumulative. No keener appreciation of this continuity can be found than in his image of a vehicle which moves in a given direction because its wheels repeatedly describe the same circle (p. 253). It is no small merit of Toynbee's work, then, that history emerges from its pages as a polarized, dialectical tension between constancy and change.

The grand scheme of cultural evolution as it unfolds in Toynbee's pages is based on a contrapuntal interplay between the human psyche and the environment in which it operates. The environment in this case is con-

ceived as being originally a physical milieu and later a social structure, each in its turn "challenging" men's creative ingenuity. It is, in my judgment, one of its major advances in the study of history and it succeeds in dealing with problems which have been wholly or partly intractable to traditional monistic hypotheses. It is therefore all the more regrettable that Toynbee has impaired its potential value by casting it into the mold of a crude pseudo-Darwinism.

Let me point out that civilization, according to Toynbee's thesis, flourishes only in a hostile environment (whether physical or social) because man's creativity comes into play only as a problem-solving device. If that is true, can we draw the extreme conclusion that the probability of a civilization's birth and growth vary directly with the harshness of the environment? Apparently, the logic of the argument is at variance with the record of the historical past and Toynbee is only too well aware of this to follow the rigorous dictates of his own reasoning to its ultimate conclusions. "We shall find," he writes, "that the interaction of challenge and response is subject to a 'law of diminishing returns,' we shall conclude that there is a mean range of severity at which the stimulus is at its highest, and we shall call this degree the optimum, as contrasted with the maximum" (p. 146). This *deux ex machina* of a "golden mean," with its graded variation of the challenge, however plausible it may seem at first blush, will be found, on further reflection, to be but a verbal reformulation of the same problem rather than an approach to a solution. Civilization flourishes under the optimum degree of challenge; the optimum degree of challenge is determined by its success in sustaining a civilization! Huxley, in his day, mercilessly exposed the crude vulgarization of Darwin's theory by pointing out the utter absurdity of speaking of the "survival of the fittest" (the "fit" being simply those who survived!). In a somewhat different form, it has now been reincorporated in Toynbee's grand survey of cultural evolution. If the dictum has no logical validity in the organic world, it does not acquire intellectual respectability by its transference to the socio-cultural world.

This is an instance of the curious mélange of a static mechanical style of thinking which this work blends with its own brand of emergent evolutionism. It loses sight of the fact that man faces his "challenging" environment armed with a heritage of technology, forms of production, and social organization. The degree of "challenge" which a given environ-

ment offers, then, is relative to the level of technological and economic development already achieved by a society. A challenge which is excessive to a nomad people may be perfectly within the capacities of a settled agricultural group and an environment which is amenable to an industrial society may defeat an agricultural economy. The measure of difference between success and failure is to a large degree a measure of socio-technological development. Toynbee, needless to say, is not unaware of this (p. 141), but he steadfastly refuses to come to terms with it or to make use of it in following the careers of his "civilizations."

If, then, we turn our attention to some of the sociological presuppositions on which the Toynbeean system rests, we shall find that they are, for the most part, highly questionable. The conception of technological and economic growth of a civilization, as it is found in *A Study of History,* is too circumscribed and static to be useful. It will be helpful in this connection, if we recall that all the original seminal societies represented technological and economic advances made in response to the challenge of their exacting physical environments. Once the forces of nature had been harnessed to do man's bidding, the growth of a society becomes an internal matter. Its structure became more complicated, its functions more varied and differentiated, and the problems which confronted it, social in their origin. In short, it was no longer a passive respondent to the problems flung out by nature, but an entity actively determining the course of its future destiny. Toynbee thus conceives "progress" as a process of "etherialization," a transfer of group effort from the physical-economic sphere to the socio-spiritual sphere. Can we accept this interpretation as a valid representation of the role of economics and technology in the history of social change?

If Toynbee's conception is critically scrutinized, I think it will be found to contain a deceptive half-truth based on a misapprehension of human economic activities. The conquest of nature and the satisfaction of man's economic needs is not a single irretrievable act in the historic plot which, once enacted, becomes a thing of the past incapable of recall or re-enactment. If this is the meaning of Toynbee's analysis, it is obviously a static and self-defeating proposition. Economic and technical progress, whether it be an uninterrupted continuum or a discontinuous series of "revolutions," is dynamically integrated with all the stages of a society's

career. Every increase in the productivity of human labor has exerted a double historic influence: it has satisfied existing wants and has led to the enlargement of the sphere of emergent wants. If, as Toynbee asserts, progress is "etherialization," how can an increasing portion of social energy be directed to the higher realms, if it is not first released from the drudgery of mere physical existence by a more productive use of the offerings of nature? How, in other words, can a society's stock of non-material culture be enlarged unless it rests on an economic surplus which alone makes possible the leisure necessary for its cultivation.

To pose these questions does not involve an endorsement of the Marxist dictum that the speed, direction, or form of "etherialization" is determined by economic forces. Nor do they commit us to a denial of the truth that extraeconomic factors have frequently induced changes in the economic system. They merely serve as a reminder that economics and technical progress are not the nullities in the scheme of history which Toynbee insists they are. The unqualified proposition that there is an inverse, or at best neutral, relationship between economic and technical improvements and "qualitative progress" is therefore a misreading of history. And, indeed, if we are mindful of the examples Toynbee adduces in corroboration of his conviction, it soon becomes evident that it originates in a simple confusion between history in its positive sense and an ethical or normative valuation of what history did. Many of these examples can be ruled out as irrelevant for the simple reason that they are not instances of genuine technical progress as that term is usually understood. Economists use the term to characterize either a mechanical invention or new combination of productive factors which results in an increase of physical output per unit of labor. It is therefore playing fast and loose with the meaning of words to submit Graeco-Roman slavery or its American counterpart as evidence in the case. The same may be said for the use of technique in purely military arts (pp. 194-196). In each of these cases, the change involved is not a change in technical methods, but a redistribution of power relationships. A military minority by waging successful imperialistic wars, simply enlarges the quantity of human labor available for exploitation. Oppenheimer once shrewdly pointed out this fundamental distinction between the "political means" and the "economic means"; in losing sight of it, Toynbee has robbed his case of much of

its cogency.[2] Turning, then, to the instances which might conceivably constitute admissable evidence, there is a strong temptation to confront Toynbee with the accusation of the same narcissistic view of the past which he hurls at our "materialistic" history, *viz.,* that "each generation is apt to design its history of the past in accordance with its own ephemeral scheme of thought" (p. 193). For if our technical age has written history in its own image, the theologian-historian Toynbee has rewritten it with a highly sensitive awareness of a different image.

What other verdict is possible when we read that although Mayan society was technologically inferior to Aztec and Yucatan societies, it nevertheless "achieved a much finer civilization" (p. 194)? The hierarchy of values implicit in this passing phrase is rendered almost clinically plain when we are informed that "Upper Paleolithic Society remained content with the implements of rough workmanship, but it developed a fine aesthetic sense. . . . The deft and vivid charcoal sketches of animals . . . on the walls of Paleolithic Man's cave-dwellings, excite our admiration. The Lower Neolithic Society took infinite pains to equip itself with finely ground tools. . . . [The] change which inaugurates a striking progress in terms of technique is distinctly a setback in terms of civilization." We are thus confronted with a perfect instance of historical relativism, run rampant. A historian who has given intellectual and ethical hostages to Ford rather than Christ could arrive at a conclusion equally pleasing to himself by simply transposing the terms "Upper Paleolithic" and "Lower Neolithic" in the self-same passage!

If the altercation between Toynbee and the "Materialists" had been removed from Clio's musty, dimly lit quarters into the clear, open air of logical discourse and ethical evaluation, Toynbee would soon have realized that the vaulting imagination, the intuitive grasp, the intellectual ingenuity and the aesthetic sense which fashioned the first polished stone wheel was

[2]Frank Oppenheimer, *The State*. That Toynbee is not altogether oblivious of this difference is evidenced in his differentiation between technical improvements *per se* and imperialism, or as he calls it, "conquest of the human environment" (pp. 189-192). Examples of the latter are therefore out of order in any discussion of the former. It is true of course that a ruling class can subsist on the fruits of exploitation as readily as it can prosper on the economic surplus resulting from genuine technical innovation. But the long-run prospects are not comparable. Wars on a large scale are destructive and slavery pauperizes and displaces the supply of free labor and may exhaust the soil. Toynbee is aware of this too (pp. 190, 196).

of the same breed which entered into the composition of charcoal sketches on palaeolithic cave-walls; that the equations of an Einstein or the vacuum tube of a Marconi are of comparable creative stature with the portraits of a Rembrandt or the verses of a Keats. Perhaps he might persist in his preference for the latter genres; but his study of history would no longer consign thousands of years of man's career to Purgatory because they did not share his preferences! Had the vexatious misunderstanding been cleared up, his six-volume work might even have included a chapter on man's economic experience and his "scientific" responses to the "challenge" presented by the mystery of the universe.

I have tried to suggest that Toynbee's work is a vast effort to force 5,000 years of human history into the Procustean bed of an ethical dualism. His persistent refusal to recognize any affinity, however remote or indirect, between the "material" life of a society and its "qualitative progress" is not unrelated to other generalizations equally open to suspicion. Ranking high among them is the dubious distinction between the "creative minority" and the "dominant minority" so crucial to his argument. It is one of those distinctions whose facile plausibility compels ready acceptance. Closer reflection, however, suggests that these "minorities," as they figure in the argument, are not historical realities but creatures of a schematic abstractionism. A "creative minority," it is asserted, provides the dynamic impetus for the successful "responses" of a society in the growth phase of its existence. Its position of leadership in such a society is not based on coercive political power over the "internal proletariat" but on its ability to invent solutions to the problems of group life and to enlist the willing, if mechanical, adherence of the masses. Per contra, a "dominant minority," no longer gifted with this creative spark, can maintain its superior status only by recourse to coercive political power which destroys the internal equilibrium of the group and invites "social schism." It is therefore both the symbol and substance of social decay. Thus Toynbee![3]

And again, we may ask whether this is a reasonable reproduction of the behavior of historic minorities in power, or an ethical prescription of

[3]In the Toynbeean scheme of things, "creative" and "dominant" minorities as well as the "proletariat" are not socio-economic strata. The proletariat of Toynbee, for instance, is not the proletariat of Marx, but the "masses" of Ortega y Gasset. Its hallmark is not property-alienation but cultural sterility.

how minorities should use their power. No great historic society of which we have any record, has ever come into existence or been held together as a functioning unit without the employment of coercive power. What Toynbee calls mechanical mimesis by the masses could not possibly be anything but the result of the application of one particular species of power—that which is directed to the mind and spirit of men rather than their bodies. But it is power nonetheless, exercised by a minority of the population.

It is, of course, idle to deny that some historic elites have exercised more wisdom in their use of power than others, and have, in consequence, enlisted a larger measure of acquiescence on the part of their "internal proletariats." The valid distinction, then, is not between "creative" and "dominant" minorities, but between "dominant minorities" which are also creative and those which are merely and nakedly coercive. In any case, it is a truism which has escaped Toynbee that the precondition of cultural creativity is a minimum of leisure and access to an economic surplus. How these were made available to his "creative" minorities, without the exercise of coercive power, in societies based on static subsistence economies, is one of the unsolved mysteries of Toynbeean sociology. Evidently, the highly "creative" theocracy of Egypt was not troubled by the niceties of the dichotomy when its votaries composed a tribute to Ptolemy Epiphanes for his generosity in such matters as tax privileges and thus—symbolically enough—bequeathed to us the Rosetta Stone that opened the record of ancient Egypt to modern eyes! The coruscant creativity of Periclean Athens was not dulled by Athenian imperialism in and out of the Delean League. The same medieval church which nurtured St. Thomas' "Summa," also collected its tithes with considerable care. The Renaissance aristocracy that encouraged a Petrarch also tutored a Cesare Borgia. The "enlightened monarchs" who discoursed with Voltaire and Diderot were not averse to an occasional war of predation. Modern industrial capitalists, in their creative zeal to release production from the fetters of manual work have, in doing so, also won for themselves the fortunes and power of a "dominant" minority. The cause of intellectual clarity is not advanced by the possible counterassertion that none of the elites in this list were really "creative." To deny that the industrial pioneers of the modern age, for instance, were "creative" requires

a strained, sophistical restriction of the meaning of words which renders the whole thesis suspect.

Failure to appreciate the full implications of the spurious distinction between "creative" and "dominant" minorities is in large measure responsible for the uncritical enthusiasm with which Toynbee's profoundly misguided, if novel, scheme of periodization has been greeted in certain quarters. Periodization, at best, is a conceptual operation by which the historian abstracts from the fullness and complexity of historical events in the interests of pedagogical utility. The element of conventional distortion inherent in the very nature of such abstraction is justified if its hypothetical assumptions correspond to some form of human behavior in the real world. But the timetable by which Toynbee plots his chart of civilizations cannot claim this justification because the growth and decline phases of the culture cycle correspond to and originate in his mythological "creative" and "dominant" minorities. Thus, in his prototype, Graeco-Roman civilization, the growth phase presided over by a "creative" minority ends with the cataclysmic Peloponnesian Wars (459 B.C. to 404 B.C.) from which he dates the breakdown of that culture. The balance of some eight hundred years is marked, at first, by a "time of troubles," followed by a rally in the shape of a universal Roman state, expressing the interests of a dominant minority. Any attempt to employ this "model" would persuade the innocent novice that pre-Periclean Athens was free of internal conflict; that the whole period of Hellenistic history was a melancholy spectacle of sterile imperialism, quite innocent of genuine cultural achievement (presumably Archimedes and Galen were mere "technicians"); that the system of codified and rational law and the feats of engineering under the Roman Empire were in reality evidences of cultural sterility and decline!

If the model is then superimposed on the history of the "affiliated" Western society—and Toynbee puts it to that use—historical knowledge would undergo some grotesque changes. Since the breakdown of our society is dated from the religious wars following the Reformation (p. 553), we are compelled to conclude that the period traditionally called "medieval" marked the flowering of our civilization, and that the "Lords, Spiritual and Temporal" were a "creative" minority who mistook their own identity when they concerned themselves with feudal rents, fiefs, papal vs. imperial control, etc.

It is true that Toynbee does not explicitly draw all these conclusions; indeed he disavows some of them categorically. But this is merely a tribute to his lack of dogmatism rather than a confirmation of the consistency and relevance of his formula. He finds, for instance, that "we are already far advanced in our time of troubles," the chief feature of which is "nationalistic internecine warfare re-enforced . . . by the forces of democracy and industrialism" (pp. 552-553). His philosophic antideterminism, in this instance, exercises a restraining caution as he peers into the future; but it cannot mitigate the distortion of the past which his system of periodization entails. A determinist using the calibrations of his timetable would have to conclude that we are irretrievably doomed to disintegration. Industrialism is not a creative innovation; it is, on this interpretation, an instrumentality of a "dominant" minority!

The whole range of sociological and historical presuppositions which vitiate the argument of Toynbee's study, are, in the final analysis, applications to the field of history of a philosophical and ethical dualism. The dichotomy of mind and body are reproduced in the contrasts between "etherialization" and "technical improvements," "creative" and "dominant" minorities, "growth" and "decline." The true significance of the book, then, is not its empirical survey of the past, but its transcendental re-evaluation of the prospects for the future. We shall miss the whole import of Toynbee's message if we persist in applying the canons of secular knowledge to what is essentially a huge religious preachment.

III

The feature of Toynbee's work which most distinctively marks it off from all previous theories of history is its pronounced antideterminism. The uniform pattern of social growth postulated by Toynbee of all previous societies is not offered as an invariant "law of history" but as a more modest empirical and comparative survey of their birth, maturity, and decline. Toynbee's "challenge-response" formula as applied to the origin of society is a reaffirmation of the reality of freedom of choice left to human will. So too, at the other end of the cycle, the hypothesis that human societies are not destroyed by external powers over which they have no control, but come to grief as the result of a series of incorrect human decisions—or absence of decisions—re-emphasizes this voluntaristic, antideterministic rationale of the theory.

Man, then, according to Toynbee is a free agent, capable of genuine choices at every turn in his historical existence. And if this is so, it follows that a society may make decisions, or reverse previous decisions, which will exempt it from the dreary metamorphoses of all its predecessors. "Even if all other civilizations that have come into existence so far were to prove in fact to have followed this path," Toynbee assures us, "there is no known law of historical determinism that compels us to leap out of the intolerable frying pan of our time of troubles into the slow and steady fire of a universal state where we shall in due course be reduced to dust and ashes" (p. 553). And despite the experience of past civilizations, "we . . . are not compelled to submit the riddle of our fate to the blind arbitrament of statistics. The divine spark of creative power is still alive in us, and if we have the grace to kindle it into flame, then the stars in their courses cannot defeat our efforts to attain the goal of human endeavor" (p. 254). The survival of Western civilization is thus an act of conscious collective choice on our part. This brings us to the inner core of this elaborate and tortuous thesis. The challenge with which we are confronted today is not a challenge peculiar to our day and place but the culminating challenge of all history. It is a challenge which could not possibly have presented itself without the accumulated deposit left by the successive social catastrophes of the past. The cemetery of human civilizations is, as it were, a training ground which prepared man for the final choice!

The final choice, as Toynbee conceives it, which alone is capable of offering Western man the grace of salvation is the radical reorientation of our society on a religious, i.e., Christian basis. In a long and lustrous section, he surveys the many secular teachings that promise survival and rejects them all. "If the divine father of the human family is left out of the reckoning, there is no possibility of forging any alternative bond of purely human texture which will by itself avail to hold mankind together. The only society that is capable of embracing the whole of mankind is a superhuman *Civitas Dei;* and the conception of a society which embraces mankind and nothing but mankind is an academic chimera" (pp. 495-496). All other solutions are contemptuously swept aside as the product of "the philosophers and the futurists—the 'high-brows' of detachment and the zealots of political and economic materialism" (pp. 527-528). The only possible "response" is a "transfiguration" of the soul of

man; turning its back on the material woes of this world and embracing a Christian system of values.

When thus viewed in its proper perspective, Toynbee's philosophy of history emerges as a postscript appended to the work of St. Augustine and Orosius, after a long delay of 1500 years. Neither space nor the scope of this inquiry permits a consideration of the merits of Toynbee's prognosis for the ills of our society. That task is properly the province of the social philosopher. But it is not amiss to point out that the teleological mystique which supplies the framework of the thesis and which is largely responsible for its éclat in our troubled world, is not and cannot possibly be the product of a temporal, relativistic or empirical survey of the human past. The historian, as historian, is part of the flow of historical time which it is his business to record; and the "facts" of history are mute to his plea for a wisdom that can only come from a retrospective omniscience of human history as a whole. In the absence of such knowledge, a person of Toynbee's persuasion, who searches for a "meaning" in history, must needs resort to an absolutistic, nontemperal system of values which enables him to transcend the limited dimensions of his immediate subject matter.

The key to an understanding of Toynbee's philosophy of history therefore, is not to be found in his technical-historical argument, but in his belief that "the kingdom of God of which Christ is King, is incommensurable with any kingdom that could be founded by a [worldly] Messiah and projected into the future. So far as this *Civitas Dei* enters into the time dimension at all, it is not as a dream of the future, but a spiritual entity interpenetrating the present . . . the omnipresence of God involves his immanence in this world and every living soul in it, as well as His transcendent existence on supra-mundane planes" (pp. 529-530). "The Kingdom of God . . . is not in time at all, but in a different spiritual dimension and . . . by virtue of this difference of dimension is able to penetrate our mundane life and transfigure it" (p. 525).

Toynbee's life work shares the fate of most philosophies of history. The vision of a seer, its meaning and purpose are being disfigured by idolators who insist that it is science.

THE READER WRITES

"The Usable Past"

Dear Sir:

In his article, "America and the 'Usable Past'" (fall issue), Mr. Louis Filler was apparently so annoyed by the "unequivocally radical" point of view in my book, *Critics and Crusaders,* that he became dogmatic and arbitrary in his effort to impugn my sincerity and scholarship. Let me cite some of the evidence.

Mr. Filler begins with the patronizing assumption that my book was "a substitute for several dozen others" in that it aimed to present the gist of their contents within the covers of a single volume. Thereupon he scolds me for failing to represent these books fairly and adequately. In one sense, of course, most works of scholarship, including Mr. Filler's own writings, make use of pertinent available material; to imply that my book falls into the "hack" variety as a consequence is at best an irresponsible judgment.

Although *Critics and Crusaders* contains twenty-five chapters and deals with six different social movements and eighteen prominent individuals, Mr. Filler concentrates his attack on the chapter devoted to William Lloyd Garrison—with the implication that the alleged weaknesses of this study are typical of the others. The burden of his criticism is that I have willfully or thoughtlessly disregarded the findings of the "formidable students [who] have seriously challenged the Garrison legend." I beg to assure him that this is not the case. I am familiar with the writings of Professors Allan Nevins and D. L. Dumond. I respect their work but do not agree with their conclusions. They have not convinced me, as they have Mr. Filler, that Garrison is "not to be mentioned in the same breath with men who welded the North together in principle or led it to victory at the polls and on the battlefield." To me such a stand is neither scholarly nor realistic. One need not deny Theodore Weld, James Birney, and other conservative Abolitionists their important contributions to the antislavery movement—as I certainly have not in my discussion of Abolition—to give Garrison his due. The undeniable truth is that for more than thirty years he was the outstanding agitator against slavery and the generally accepted leader of the majority faction of the Abolitionists. To accuse me of glorifying the fiery crusader by deliberately distorting the truth is unworthy of a serious critic.

Mr. Filler charges me with "gross contradictions." As evidence he offers the single assertion that after having pictured Garrison as the leader of the Abolitionists I state, in a discussion of John Brown, that "while other Abolitionists merely ranted, Brown had the great courage to precipitate action." Is this alleged discrepancy a "gross contradiction"? I submit that in Brown's judgment Garrison did rant; but have not many successful leaders of men and movements opened themselves to this accusation?

For Mr. Filler's information I want to say that Mr. J. C. Malin's book on John Brown appeared more than a year after I had completed my chapter on the hanged fanatic. Since I found the volume a highly emotional attack on Brown and since it did not contain any evidence requiring the revision of my study, I did not include the book in my bibliography.

Mr. Filler further accuses me of not knowing "how to evaluate John Brown's desperate deed, or Emma Goldman's work, or Randolph Bourne's repudiation of the political state, or John Reed's vicissitudes." Whether this is true or not I am willing to leave to the final judgment of my readers and to time. (The fact is that I had each chapter read by an expert and was uniformly praised for my insight and sympathy.) But I strongly object to his statement that my inability to evaluate my subjects is the result of my negligence to "investigate the background" and of my being "a sentimentalist, enamored of the beautiful word, indifferent to the substantial deed." If he had read my studies without the blinders of his own prejudices he would have noted that I had gone to considerable pains to read with care not only the available writings of my subjects but also the numerous works about them. When he claims therefore that I wrote many of my chapters "on the basis of one or two standard works" he writes maliciously and in complete disregard of the facts. The truth is that I did not depend merely on "standard works"—for some of the persons I dealt with there is not even one such work; in each instance I devoted myself first to my subject's own writings—no mean task in connection, say, with Thoreau, Thorstein Veblen, or Henry George—and then to the available background material.

Mr. Filler finally condemns me for my "lack of a proper respect for things as they are." The truth is again quite otherwise. It is my deep respect for things as they are that made me refuse to follow the current tendency among academic historians to play down the radical aspects of our history and to display their originality by kicking the shins of the social critics and crusaders they don't happen to like. Mr. Filler and his mentors will do well to exercise the respect for reality which they smugly accuse others of lacking.

New York, N.Y. CHARLES A. MADISON

* * *

Dear Sir:

Mr. Madison accuses me of "patronizing" him; I merely took at face value his apparently modest preface. "I have made no especial effort at original research," he wrote (p. x), "but I have sought to familiarize myself with the work and writings of each subject of study and to make the discussion true to fact as well as to the spirit of American liberalism. *The bibliography indicates the material used in the preparation of each chapter.*" (Italics added.) He deems me "malicious," but that seems to be because of his peculiar ideas of scholarship. I repeat: the backbone of the larger number of his essays is to be found not in the undiscriminating and in-

adequate collection of items noted in his bibliography, but in a handful of those he found most "usable."

I do indeed imply that the weakness of his chapter, or rather essay, on Garrison are present in his other sections, including those I termed his "most original" ones. His defense of it relieves me of the essentially unprofitable task of more elaborately illustrating his method. He does not, he says, "deny" the importance of the contribution of Weld, Birney, and other "conservative" abolitionists. But where, specifically, does he mention Weld—he mentions, or rather, someone else mentions a "Mr. Birney" (James? William?)—and, more important, where does he compare their contribution with that of Garrison? For example, was Harriet Beecher Stowe's achievement dependent upon Garrison's work?

Mr. Madison asserts it to be "undeniable" that Garrison was "for more than thirty years . . . the outstanding agitator against slavery and the generally accepted leader of the majority faction [?] of the Abolitionists." That is *precisely* what Dumond, Barnes, and others not mentioned in his bibliography have denied. Must one be convinced by their argument to come to grips with it? Mr. Madison says categorically that I have been. What is his evidence? Can he cite it in my essay? Has he other sources of information about what I believe or don't believe? If he will read my study (*New England Quarterly*, September, 1946) of Parker Pillsbury —who was in some ways more of an abolitionist firebrand than Garrison himself— he will be better able to judge. I do not feel called upon to defend my liberalism, assuming Mr. Madison does not equate liberalism with conservatism. Mr. Madison lists my books in his bibliography; is he prepared to term them illiberal?

The difficulty with work like Mr. Madison's is that it re-enforces prejudice and flatters ignorance. To call Theodore Weld a "conservative" abolitionist is debatable, to say the least. To say that Professor Malin's study contains nothing "requiring the revision of [Mr. Madison's] study" is remarkable; I would like the name of the "expert" who will support him in this decision respecting the "usable past." Mr. Madison has confused the point, and, apparently, his own reference (p. 193) about John Brown. It was not Brown who thought Garrison ranted, in this connection, but, presumably, Thoreau (with Mr. Madison's approval?) or Mr. Madison himself. My point was that Mr. Madison made no effort to think through the implications of Garrison's nonresistance principles or Brown's terroristic act, no effort to reconcile them. It is not his social attitudes which are here in question. "So far, so good," I wrote in my essay, when presenting his logic, though not agreeing with it. It is not even his "scholarship" which has been challenged. It is his unwillingness to treat candidly whatever it is he has read. Who is "smug," one who states as "undeniable" what earnest and original students have denied—or one who tries to present a personal decision among conflicting claims and ideologies?

LOUIS FILLER

Mr. Glicksberg's "Character of Modern Criticism"

Dear Sir:

I have just read Mr. Glicksberg's comments on my book *No Voice Is Wholly Lost* in the Fall 1947 issue. According to him, my criticism "preaches the doctrine of the class war. Marxist categories are marched in full array and cultural products are measured against these standards." And, in my attempt to reconcile Marxism with Freudianism, "Freudianism is eaten alive" by Marxism.

With the exception of one critic—and he subsequently retracted the charge—Mr. Glicksberg stands supremely alone in this judgment. The "class war" doctrine which is so apparent to him has completely escaped the notice of every other critic of my book, from Francis Hackett, Mark Schorer (*New York Times*), Mark Van Doren and Max Lerner (letters) to Edwin Buehrer (*Journal of Liberal Religion*), Theodore Brameld (*Ethics*), R. T. Flewelling (*Personalist*), and Thomas Mann (letter), to mention some. As for the Marxist press, the literary quarterly *Mainstream* has ignored my book and one of the editors of *Science and Society* attacked the chapter on Marx, and its reviewer criticized the chapter on Marx and Freud.

Allow me to correct Mr. Glicksberg's picture by stating the actual categories and thesis of the book:

My central concern is to trace the category of alienation through writers and thinkers caught in the chaos of standards in the period between the two World Wars. I cheerfully admit that I relate this category to the historic framework—including the socio-economic, along with the psychologic, the philosophic, religious, etc. But the whole *point* of the book is that literature and culture *cannot* be reduced to the "class struggle"—economic factors. It would show that despite the socio-economic chaos, all writers and thinkers *transcend* this base and sound the perennial motifs of man—all writers and thinkers, including those whom some call decadent, such as Nietzsche, Proust, Lawrence, Joyce, Kafka, Schnitzler, Gide, Santayana, Celine, to name some. To highlight this, my central theme, I chose the title from Hesiod and Aristotle: No Voice Is Wholly Lost That Is The Voice of Many Men.

A note on Mr. Glicksberg's other statement on my treatment of the relation between Freudianism and Marxism. This chapter does not simply attempt "to reconcile" the two. As its title indicates, this chapter deals with both the "clash and the congruence" between them, and urges the need for the *interplay* between the psychological constant and the sociological variation.

Brooklyn, N.Y. HARRY SLOCHOWER

CONTRIBUTORS

MICHAEL O'HEARN is the pseudonym of a young newspaperman with several years experience in reporting national and international affairs. His assignment, for some time, has been the United Nations.

Associate professor of industrial and labor relations at Cornell University, MILTON R. KONVITZ is also editor of the new *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* published at that institution. He is the author of *On the Nature of Value: the Philosophy of S. Alexander* (1946), *The Alien and the Asiatic in American Law* (1946), *The Constitution and Civil Rights* (1947), and is editor (with Sidney Hook) of *Freedom and Experience: Essays Presented to Horace M. Kallen* (1947).

ELIOT L. WAGNER is a young New York writer. He has previously published stories in *Opinion, Crisis,* and *Commentary.*

PAUL M. GREGORY has been engaged in bank research, has served as economist in several agencies of the federal government, and contributes with some regularity to the professional journals. He has taught at a number of universities, is at present associate professor of economics at the University of North Carolina.

"The Marxist Criticism of Literature" is the second section of STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN's forthcoming book *The Armed Vision* to be published in *The Antioch Review.* In our last issue appeared his "Constance Rourke and Folk Criticism." Mr. Hyman is on the staff of *The New Yorker.*

KENNETH W. HUNT is director of Glen Helen and associate professor of biology at Antioch College.

MORRIS WATNICK teaches history in New York City. He has recently prepared a translation of Rudolf Hildering's *Das Finanzkapital* and is planning a new book on the theory of imperialism.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946, of The Antioch Review, published Quarterly at Yellow Springs, Ohio, for October 1, 1947.
State of Ohio, County of Greene:

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the state and county aforesaid, personally appeared Paul Bixler, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Chairman of the Editorial Board of the Antioch Review and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily, weekly, semiweekly or triweekly newspaper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations), printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 23rd day of September, 1947.
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